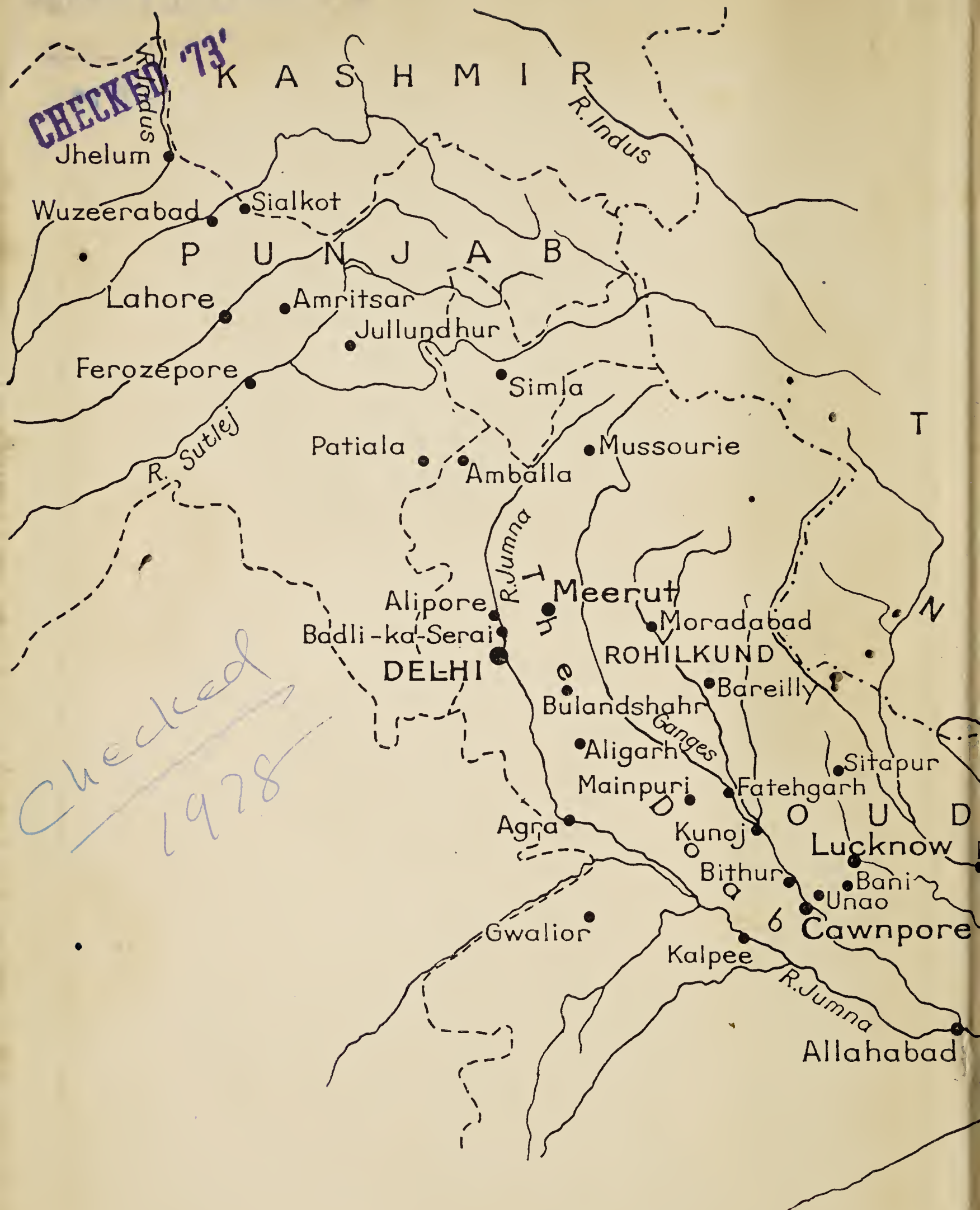


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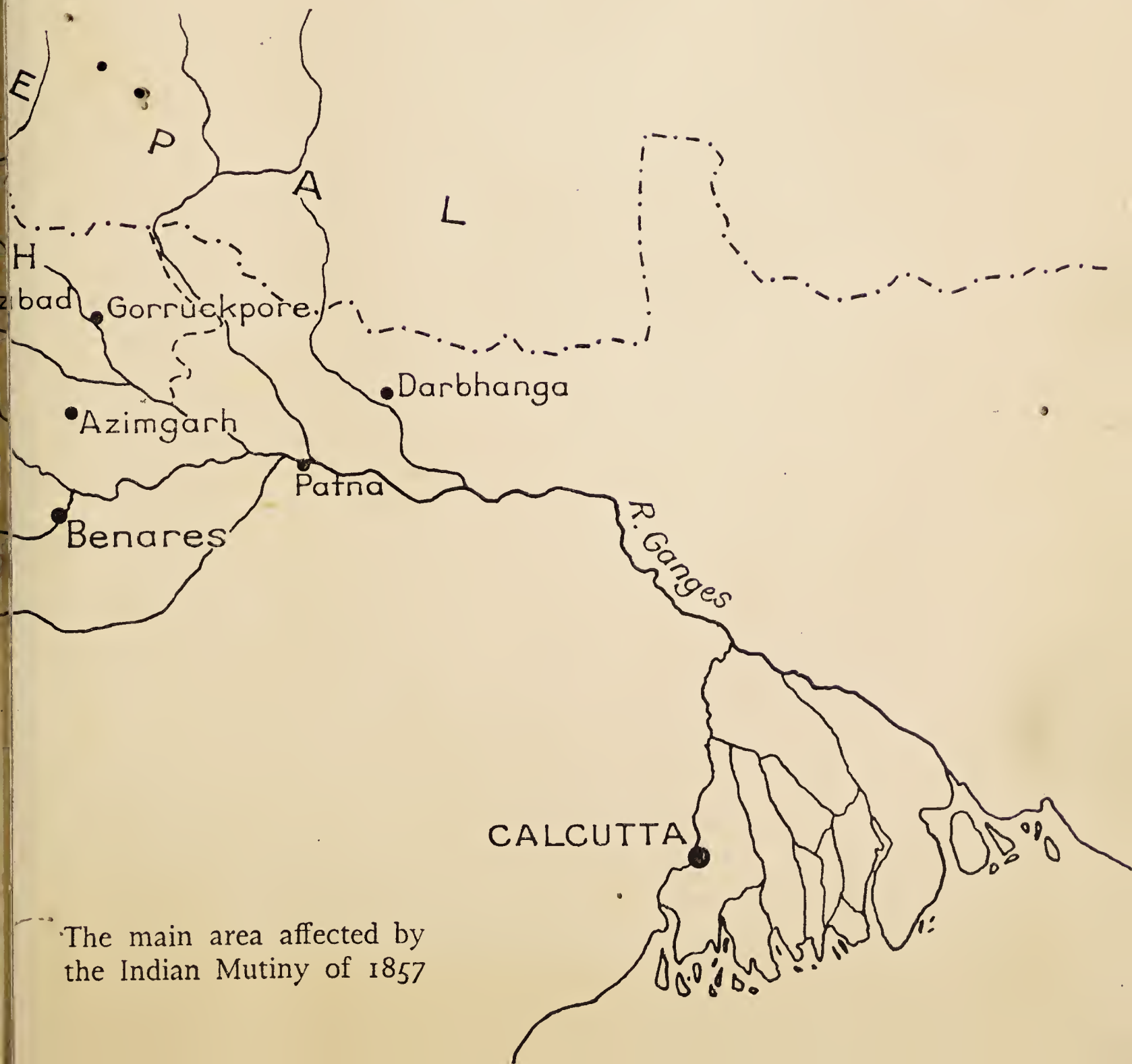
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The Rani of Jhansi

THE
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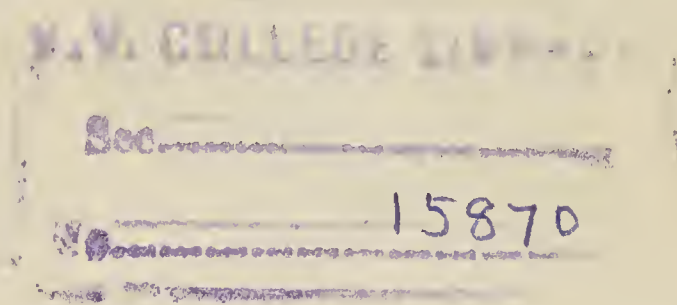
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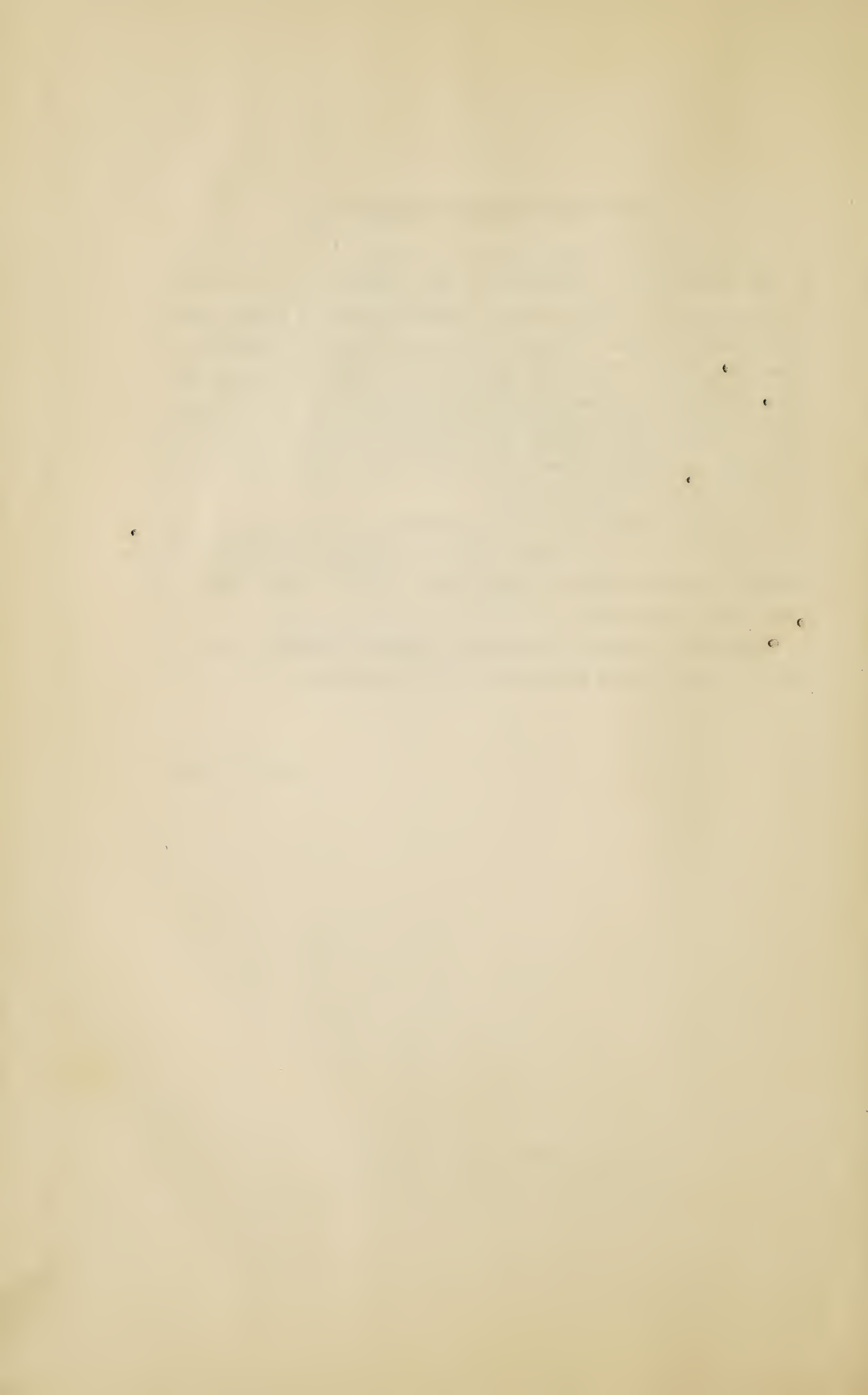
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I am also grateful for the assistance of my friend, Mr. King, of the War Office Library, whose knowledge of exactly which books I shall need has so often been of immense value to me.

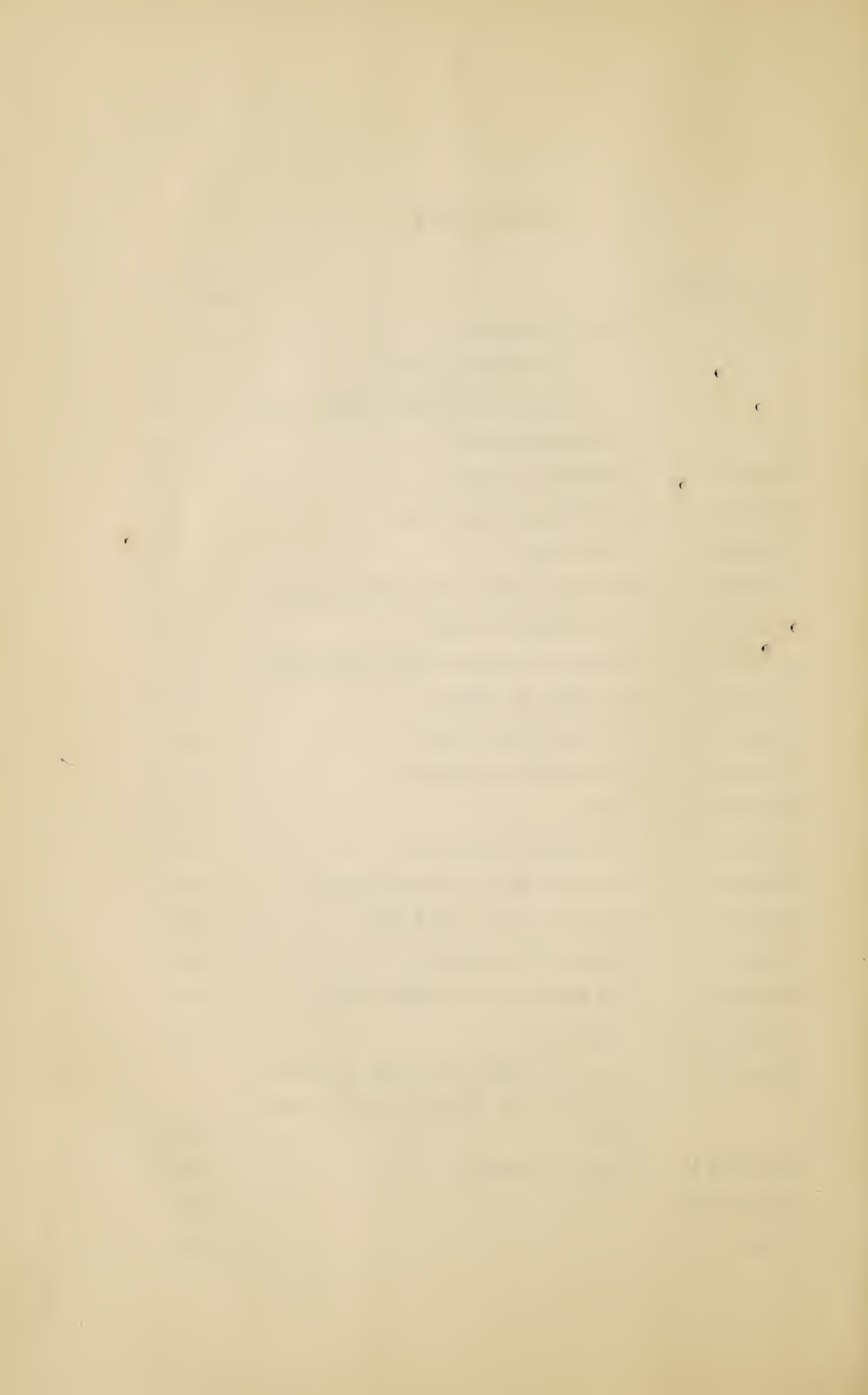
My wife, Frances, has played a quite invaluable part, as she has done in the production of all my books.

Jackie Smyth



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Introduction

THE RANI OF JHANSI was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable—and controversial—women in military history. Like many other Indians the exact date of her birth is uncertain. She was, however, married in 1842 and was reputed to be rather older than was usual for an Indian bride, who was normally married before puberty. This might put her at about 14 or 15. When she died therefore, in 1858, she would probably have been about 30; but she may well have been younger than this.

The historical records of the 14th (King's) Hussars who, at the time of the Mutiny, were the 14th Light Dragoons, had this to say about the Rani: "She was a very handsome woman, about 24 years of age, a perfect Amazon in bravery, leading her troops, mounted like a man—just the sort of dare-devil woman that soldiers admire."

The 8th Hussars, at whose hands she met her death in a cavalry charge while leading her troops, and in which the squadron commander won the Victoria Cross, say this in their Regimental History: "Here, too, the Rani of Jhansi, dressed as a cavalry leader, was cut down by a Hussar, and in her death the rebels lost their bravest and best military leader."

The Rani was strong in physique, in character and in

INTRODUCTION

purpose and she undoubtedly had great natural powers of leadership—both in peace and war. Had she had more opportunity to develop and display these powers, and better material at her command, she might have been renowned as a second Joan of Arc—save only for the one blot on her escutcheon which made her the British enemy Number One at a certain period of the Mutiny. She was held responsible for the brutal and cold-blooded murder of 66 British men, women and children at Jhansi on the 7th June, 1857. The unanimous belief by British troops at the time that this was true was the reason why they fought with such ferocity when the operations for the capture of Jhansi took place later on, and why, almost undoubtedly, the Rani would have been executed had she been captured alive.

Having examined many accounts of this atrocity, however, I have come to the conclusion that the Rani might well have had nothing to do with it. But she had thrown in her lot with the rebels at a time when passions were at fever heat and when the tide was flowing strongly against the British—and she had to ride with the tide whether she wished to or not. On the other hand there were those who maintained that at best she showed a callous disregard for the fate of her captives, while, at worst, that she had definitely approved of their murder. But as none of the victims lived to tell the tale of this atrocity there can be no definite evidence one way or another.

One would naturally have liked to know in more detail of the Rani's doings during the last two years of her life; but, once the Mutiny had started, there was naturally little written about her on the British side except when she clashed with General Sir Hugh Rose's Central India Field Force, the first objective of which was to capture Jhansi and defeat the Rebellious Rani. Both Lord Canning, the Governor-General, and Lord Elphinstone, the wise and influential Governor of the Bombay Presidency, attached the very greatest importance to the defeat of the Rani and the

INTRODUCTION

capture of Jhansi, which they considered to be the main stronghold of rebel power in Central India.

This was as trying a campaign as any in which British troops have ever taken part—or native troops either for that matter—and it must not be forgotten that the bulk of Sir Hugh's force consisted of native troops who had remained loyal to the British. I have described this historic little campaign, which was instrumental in bringing about the beginning of the end of the Indian Mutiny, in some detail. It was indeed a story which brought great credit to all the troops who took part; but it was to the commanders, both of units and regiments—and to the higher command particularly that the main credit of the final victory was due.

I have started this book by briefly setting the scene of the Mutiny as a whole and then, in that context, have told the story of the Rani and the Central India Field Force. As the tale unfolds two brilliant and forceful personalities emerge—the Rani and Sir Hugh Rose. But though this short period of history was packed with drama and the Central Indian Campaign—a magnificent feat of British arms—is a fascinating study, it is the Rani herself who engages our interest throughout.

PRELUDE

The Protagonists

I THE RANI OF JHANSI

THE FRONTISPIECE depicts the Rani in court dress. She is laden with jewels and her feminine charms are well displayed. The face which looks out from the much ornamented sari and the jewelled nose-ring is young and soft. It may possibly have been painted at the time of her marriage, when she was only about 14 or 15. Allowing for the flattery which must have been required of a court portrait of this sort, the face is of an attractive girl. But it is too young and unformed to give us much of a clue to the character she subsequently displayed.

A contemporary painting¹ by a local artist is of a warrior queen personified, eyes flashing, sword in hand, armoured and accoutred. But she still wears a feminine necklet of pearls and ear-rings. From this portrait one might suppose that, though she had martial qualities of the highest order, she never forgot she was a woman.

Another, more stylised portrait in the Victoria and Albert Museum depicts a maturer woman, but still fine looking. The one feature common to them all is the magni-

¹ Published in *The Ranee of Jhansi*, by D. V. Tahmankar (Macgibbon & Kee Ltd., 1958).

ficent eyes, dark, lustrous and full of character. But they are warm, generous and open; there is nothing mean or cruel about them. So, if looks mean anything, one could deduce that this was true of her natural character. Whatever she may or may not have been forced to do I find it hard to believe that she was a cruel or wicked woman. She was most emphatically not the Jezebel of Jhansi that some contemporary British writers have depicted her to be. But the Indian Mutiny did arouse, not unnaturally, very deep emotions, and many cruel and brutal things were done.

A pen picture by Meadows Taylor describes her as follows: "In appearance she was fair and handsome, with a noble presence and figure and a dignified and resolute, indeed stern, expression, which appeared to have usurped the place of the peculiar softness which, when she was younger and had a good hope of a prosperous life, distinguished her."

• John Lang, the eminent lawyer whom she consulted about the succession in Jhansi, described her as "a woman of about middle size, rather stout but not too stout. Her face must have been very handsome when she was younger, and even now it had many charms . . . The expression also was very good and very intelligent. The eyes were particularly fine and the nose very delicately shaped."

We have other descriptions which depict her as somewhat thick-set in figure, but well shaped, with a strong intelligent face and fine eyes. She dressed plainly, with a marked absence of excessive jewellery and ornaments, though later she adopted a more ornamental style. She is described as wearing a small cap of red silk on her head, laced with jewels. Her bodice was cut low in the front to indicate a well-developed bust, and was drawn in tightly at the waist with a belt embroidered with gold into which was stuck two carved silver mounted pistols and a small dagger. She was possessed of a masculine spirit and great resolution and, with some reason, she nursed a strong sense of grievance against the British Government.

So we have a fairly good picture of how the Rani looked. But there are many mysteries about her. When one considers that she was a Brahmin lady of good, though humble, family in an age when the majority of Hindu women of any standing spent their lives in purdah it is all the more remarkable that she could apparently both read and write, and that she had managed to attain such physical virtuosity in riding, shooting and swordsmanship, not to mention her remarkable understanding of the art of war. Some sources suggest that she was brought up with boys at the court of the exiled Peshwa at Bithur, where her father was an official.

It is just possible that she may have attended the lessons of Tantia Topi, Rao Sahib and the Peshwa's son, Nana Sahib, and practised with them the manly arts of hunting, shooting and fencing, though they were much older than she was. Somehow she must have acquired these arts; but we do not really know how. That she was a tomboy of great force of character is evident; small wonder then if her father should have found her high spirits and physical energies difficult to control and should have thankfully allowed his daughter to work them off with the boys of the court, who could perhaps have been her playmates at this time. However these details of her childhood must be conjectural.

Manu, the diminutive by which she was known as a girl, can have had no inkling of the future that lay in store for her. She had no call to prepare herself for great things, no urge to fit herself for the role of warrior queen. Indeed, it was most unlikely that she would make a grand match, although it is reported that her horoscope, to which great importance was paid in those days, did indicate that she would marry well.

Apart from her natural physical strength, force of character, attractive looks and intelligence, it seems unlikely that she was conditioned in any way differently from other

Hindu girls of good family. Her mother was most probably illiterate, though according to one source a pious and well-informed Hindu lady who could quote long passages from the Hindu writings from memory. No one has suggested that her father was a particularly outstanding man, though he seems to have been a man of sense and character. Her own subsequent behaviour indicated a strongly-marked sense of religious orthodoxy.

It would seem, therefore, that she had unique gifts which were rapidly developed through the rôle she was called upon to play. It is a well-known phenomenon that a personality often grows to the size required by circumstances. This I think is what happened in the case of the Rani. But of course her particular natural attributes were tailor-made for the job.

Of her inner character it is harder to conjure up a picture. Was she ruthless, cruel and insensitive? Or was she rather like our own Elizabeth I, a woman conscious of female weaknesses, encircled by danger and trying to steer a diplomatic and skilful course to safe-guard her throne and her succession? I think this latter picture is nearer to the truth. We know that at one point the Mutineers in Jhansi were against her succession to the rulership and that they had decided to call in a distant relative for the job. But by giving money to the sepoy, under great pressure, she seems to have bought them off. She must, however, have felt great anxiety as to whether she could continue to rule in Jhansi. A wrong step and she might well have suffered the fate of many eastern potentates, whose lives were often quickly ended by assassination, if not by rebellion or intrigue.

When the Rani married Gangadhar Rao, the Raja of Jhansi, she was still a very young and unformed girl. High-spirited and intelligent, yes; but still unsophisticated in the ways of the world—both at the court of Jhansi and in the Indian political scene. It was customary for Hindu brides to look upon their husbands almost as gods—which must often

have been difficult—but in the case of Gangadhar Rao and Lakshmibai (as she became known on her marriage) it may be assumed that the young bride found a great deal to admire. Her husband was an upright, gentle and sensitive man, a fine and just ruler and a lover of the arts. It would seem likely therefore that he had a considerable influence upon her, and that she became deeply attached to him as a person, even if she did not necessarily love him in the accepted Western sense of the word. Hindus had very different attitudes to marriage and a girl might well consider herself lucky to be joined to a good and kindly man. And of course he was a great deal older than she was—a fact which may well have had some bearing on their inability to produce an heir after the unfortunate death of their firstborn.

In those days Indian rulers were very often impotent—whether because of ill-health, debauchery or old age. Often, of course, the brides were mere children whose health was sometimes ruined by the premature bearing of a child. But we know that the Rani was a girl of exceptional physique; therefore it would seem more likely that the fault lay with her spouse.

But because she admired him greatly his wishes with regard to the succession would have doubtless seemed very important to her. In addition, there was the fact that a Hindu widow had a very thin time of it. She was generally relegated to a menial position, her hair was shaved and she was considered literally less than the dust, unless she had produced an heir. So the whole question of the acceptance by the British of the adopted boy, Damodar, would have seemed of paramount importance to Lakshmibai.

Although Gangadhar Rao was well aware of Lord Dalhousie's policy in regard to adoption and had greatly feared that the son, adopted almost on his death bed, would not be accepted by the British, he obviously hoped that his own beneficent rule and loyalty to the British Raj would be

THE RANI OF JHANSI

taken into account. These hopes I am sure he unfolded to Lakshmibai, in itself something unique in the relationship between an Indian and his wife, where traditionally the wife was not of great account in matters of state. When he died and the British refused to recognise Damodar as the lawful heir—and the Rani as Regent in accordance with the expressed wish of the Raja—she felt a bitter sense of grievance and injustice, since the boy had been adopted properly in the light of Indian custom and tradition.

I think this bitterness was enhanced by the fine qualities in her own character. This girl was an open, intelligent and essentially honest person by nature, with a strong instinct for fair play. Her tomboyish qualities, her ability to get on with boys, her intelligence and generous spirit, seem to show an antithesis to the ultra-feminine, sometimes secretive love of intrigue and acceptance of whatever came along, which marked the character of many Indian women—often from force of circumstances and upbringing. She had somehow escaped from the mould at an early age and her later development stemmed from this.

The fact that her natural bent was towards the unconventional is born out by the fact that, after the death of her husband, and before the British had refused recognition of her son's succession and her own regency, she at once came out of purdah and went about meeting her people and administering the State in a most just and practical way. Such behaviour was quite out of character in one of her traditions and upbringing, unless one accepts that she herself was by nature unconventional. When Jhansi was about to be besieged by the British at a later date one of her first actions was to have a party for all the women and encourage them to come out of purdah and help in the work of the siege, bringing food and ammunition to the defenders and tending the sick—a highly practical step, but not one which one would expect.

So to the Rani the behaviour of the British over the suc-

cession would have appeared an act of such flagrant injustice as to be scarcely bearable. Where you have a person with a strongly-developed sense of justice, and injustice is done, then you have a motivating force strong enough to move mountains. Although her first action was to fight this injustice in any legal way possible, in the end it was clear there was no redress—and indeed, ultimately she was fighting for her very existence since it was evident that she would be blamed personally for the brutal massacres that took place at Jhansi.

This sense of grievous injustice formed the motivation behind the Rani's later career, and makes it difficult to be sure whether, in fact, she could have ordered or condoned the massacre. I think that it was not in character for her to have ordered it—nor do I think the evidence supports the fact; but she may well have condoned it from a sheer sense of self-preservation. At the time her own succession was in the balance and if she had gone against the mutineers it would have been fatal to her chances if not also to her person. There is ample evidence that she really could not have saved the Europeans even if she had wished to do so. But there is a third possibility: that she knew nothing about it until it was too late. It is by no means clear whether she herself gave a safe conduct to the Europeans in the city fort. But the fact that she did so—if indeed she did—does not prove in any way her complicity in the murder. She may have given it in all honesty and then have been precluded by circumstances beyond her control from honouring it.

But did the Rani ever give a safe conduct? Captain J. W. Pinkney, the Commissioner, who wrote to the Government on 20th November, 1858, simply states that "Risaldar Faiz Ali (the leader of the Jhansi mutineers) wrote to the garrison to say that if they vacated the fort they would not be injured." If the Rani had given the safe conduct herself surely Pinkney would have said so. Sir Robert

Hamilton, the Political Officer, obviously accepted at the time that she was not guilty. There are many conflicting accounts from various witnesses whose evidence was collected after the event; but the fact is that they *do* conflict. So I feel it is legitimate to keep an open mind, though I myself come down on the side of the Rani, partly on the grounds that I think it was out of character, and partly on the evidence, which I feel bears out her innocence of actual complicity.

There is a great divergence of opinion on many minor matters in the story of the Mutiny. Malleson and Kaye profoundly disagreed with one another on some points. Sen and Tahmankar—and other Indian historians—disagree with the British and claim a greater knowledge on the Indian side from records which were not available at the time to British historians. But the main facts are clear. It just depends from which angle you view them.

But there are other mysteries about the Rani. How did she come by her undoubted instinct for war? How did she manage to convince men like Rao Sahib of her strategic skill and leadership so that he was prepared to treat her as one of his key military advisers? At the time of the taking of Gwalior by Tantia Topi's forces the Rani had had few opportunities of showing her skill in battle. Yet he consulted her at every step. We know that she had organised her own forces with considerable ability and had fought off the pretender to the throne of Jhansi and then the Bundelas, and that she had shown leadership of high quality. But this was a man's world—in a country where women were of no account—and there were many who resented her entry into it. It was not as if she had been brought up in a warlike environment, far from it. Her knowledge must have been purely intuitive, plus an extremely large dose of common-sense and activated by a strong desire to save her throne. Joan of Arc had her voices. Lakshmibai simply had a natural wisdom in these matters. But she was impelled

along this path by her single-minded hatred of the British—and, as we know, singleness of purpose is a great concentrator of the mind.

So, if one understands her over-riding sense of purpose, and adds to that her natural qualities, together with the fact that she had everything to lose that she held dear, it is possible to understand how her achievements came about. On the one hand her widowhood condemned her to life on a very poor and uncreative level, whereas on the other hand she had come to know the joy and purpose in ruling wisely and serving her people. She knew what power was; she also understood full well what frustration meant. She was a woman of strong feelings and great physical strength, who had found a cause. Everything about her came to be canalised to a single end—her own survival and that of her adopted son, and the gratification of her dearest wish, to see the British defeated.

But she was shrewd, too. She understood completely that the British were strong and would take a lot of beating. She had enough sense not to antagonise them until there was no other way out. Historical documents abound in which she first of all wrote to the Government to try to make them accept the adoption of Damodar, and then to try to prove her own innocence in the Jhansi massacre. While Tantia Topi and the others were celebrating their successes at Gwalior she counselled caution and told them to look to their defences. She had a much better insight into the nature and quality of the British than most of her colleagues: and she never despised that quality. If she had been given half a chance by the British she might have remained a staunch and loyal supporter, a fine and just ruler of Jhansi, and become famous in quite another way. But Fate had decided her path. The British lost a fine ally and India gained a colourful legend.

And the Rani? Did she realise her true potential? She was still a young woman, growing in experience and

THE RANI OF JHANSI

wisdom every day. What might she not have done? On the other hand, had she not been opposed by a soldier of the outstanding qualities of Sir Hugh Rose, who knows what would have been the result of the campaign in Central India.

The Protagonists

2 GENERAL SIR HUGH ROSE, K.C.B.

HUGH HENRY ROSE was born at Berlin on 6th April, 1801, the son of Sir George Henry Rose, G.C.B., then Minister Plenipotentiary at the Prussian Court. It was at Berlin that the young Hugh acquired the rudiments of a military education.

His family background is not without interest. In 1744 his grandfather, George Rose, was born to David Rose and his second wife, Margaret Rose of Westerclune, another branch of the same family. David Rose, who was Episcopalian Minister at Lochlee and Lithurst, was descended from the 11th Baron Kilvarock. When George was four years old, however, he was adopted by his mother's brother, who lived in Hampstead. From there he was sent to Westminster School. Subsequently he went into the Navy and sailed for the West Indies, but finding no chance of promotion he left the Navy in 1762.

George Rose gradually worked his way into positions of importance through friends—and hard work. He was described as being a man of high personal character, amiable and benevolent, an indefatigable, accurate and rapid worker, with a clear and sound judgement, and though not brilliant in other matters his financial ability was remarkable.

This son of the manse eventually became an M.P., and an intimate of Pitt, in whose administration he served twice. He made a good deal of money and settled in Hampshire, at Cufnells in Lyndhurst, and also at Sandhills, Christchurch.

Hugh Rose's father, who subsequently became the Rt. Hon. Sir George Henry Rose, was also a considerable figure in British public life. George Henry's mother was Theodora Dues of Antigua, and he was born in 1771. Secure in the income which his father had built up, he was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he became a B.A. and an M.A. in 1795. The Principal of his college said of him at this time, "I think his abilities very considerable. I am in doubt whether he will make a good speaker. He does not want quickness of conception, but seems not to have the art of arranging his ideas to the greatest advantage. In any sudden emergency he will judge at once, and act with firmness on that judgement. I have never heard him spoken of but with approbation. His goodness of heart is such as I should wish in my most intimate friend."

George Henry's life was divided between a diplomatic career and politics. He was M.P. for Southampton from 1794 to 1813 and again between 1818 and 1844, when he represented Christchurch. He died in 1855.

So Hugh Henry Rose had interesting antecedents. His childhood was spent a great deal in diplomatic circles, which may have accounted for the natural way he himself took to a diplomatic life in later years. He never went to a public school, and thus may have preserved an unconventional way of looking at problems. His family, although well-connected, were in a sense self-made. And his family fortune relied entirely on what grandfather George had been able to accumulate—and not on hereditary lands and titles. Hugh himself was later described as being not at all well off. So traditionally and by upbringing he was a man accustomed to expect to make something of life, rather than to have it handed to him on a plate.

But is clear that the Roses, as a family, had great charm of manner, made good friends, were prepared to work very hard and had extremely good judgement in all practical matters. Mr. Hew Rose, whose genealogical papers on the family have been well preserved,¹ had this to say of the particular branch from which Hugh Rose was descended. . . . "The sons had each in their disposition something peculiar and different; but all were well-favoured, prettie gentlemen, and in good repute where they lived." Certainly Sir Hugh Rose, in all existing portraits, appears a very good-looking man.

On 8th June, 1820, Hugh Henry Rose entered the Army as an Ensign in the 93rd Highlanders, though he never served with them as he was transferred to the 19th Foot on 6th July of the same year. On 24th October, 1821, he was gazetted to a Lieutenancy and, in November, his regiment embarked for Ireland, where it was stationed until 1826, in the autumn of which year it sailed for Demerara. Rose did not go with it. He had obtained Captain's rank on 22nd July, 1826, and he went on half pay with the rank of Major on 30th December. On 19th February, 1829, he was appointed to a Majority in the 92nd (Gordon Highlanders) and joined them at Fermoy in Ireland. In February 1834 the 92nd sailed for Gibraltar, thence going to Malta in 1836. On 17th September, 1839, Rose was promoted to a Lieut-Colonelcy and for a second time went on half pay, having been appointed Consul-General in Syria. From there he was transferred to Constantinople, where he was appointed Secretary of Embassy on 2nd January, 1851. On the outbreak of the Crimean War Colonel Rose was appointed British Commissioner, with the local rank of Brigadier-General, at the headquarters of the French Commander-in-Chief (8th March, 1854). He was promoted a Major-General in January 1855, rank being back-dated to 12th December, 1854, and he was awarded a K.C.B. and other decorations.

¹ British Museum.

When the Mutiny broke out Sir Hugh was appointed to command the Poona Division in the Bombay Presidency on 18th September, 1857. It is at this point that our story starts.

Rose's military service had not been of a spectacular nature, and although it would not be true to say that he had hardly heard a shot fired in anger, having spent much of his service with the diplomats, he certainly had not commanded troops in battle.

But every time that courage, quick thinking and a flair for doing the right thing at the right time were required of him he rose supremely to the occasion. His personal gallantry was immense, and many people thought he should have gained a Victoria Cross in the Crimea. He had a wonderful talent for getting the best out of people and left every diplomatic post with praises ringing in his ears. The French in the Crimea thought the world of him. Lord Palmerston had marked him down as a man to be watched. Everything he did he did well.

An officer of the Bengal Staff Corps, writing anonymously in a series of essays on Indian historical subjects in 1866, gave him the following tribute, which perhaps sums up Rose's character very well.

"... there was a peculiarity in the character of the General who reconquered Central India which asserted itself on every occasion, and which materially influenced the fortunes of the campaign. This peculiarity evinced itself in a firm determination to succeed at all hazards; to recognise no such obstacle as 'impossibility'; to be foiled neither by deficiencies in his own camp, nor by superiority of numbers in the camp of the enemy; to regard even disease itself, though attacking his own person, as something to be trampled upon and disregarded. It showed itself likewise in greater things than these. The General who reconquered Central India had gained, either from reading, from experience, or from intuitive perception—or perhaps a combina-

tion of all three—so complete a knowledge of the ‘morale’ of an Asiatic foe, that, at a time when the pre-revolution tactics of the Austrian Army were in fashion in this country, he never lost an opportunity of seeking his enemy where he was to be found, of beating him when he found him, and of following him up to utter destruction when he had beaten him.”

When one considers that the first time Sir Hugh Rose ever set foot in India was in September, 1857, it is indeed remarkable that he should have grasped with such immediate clarity the way in which to fight a campaign in that country and the mentality of its people.

Major-General Sir Owen Tudor Burne, K.C.S.I., who had been Military Secretary to the C-in-C in India, wrote of Sir Hugh as follows:

“... In the field the rebel sepoys of the Mutiny could make nothing of a general who routed and destroyed them. His rapid marches and indomitable energy struck terror into their hearts. Who could withstand a leader who—ignoring all traditions of ordinary tactics, and in spite of cautions and reproofs—regarded himself and his troops as bullet- and heat-proof? He surprised both friend and foe by grasping instinctively with the genius of a born soldier the great principle of Indian warfare, ‘when your enemy is in the open, go straight at him, and keep him moving; and when behind ramparts still go at him, and cut off his chances of retreat, when possible; pursue him if escaping or escaped.’ To his mind simplicity was the first condition of sound strategy, more especially in operations against the armed mobs of the Indian Mutiny.”

Yet, at the time he was sent to command the Poona Division in 1857 few people had heard his name. Rathbone Low, in his book *Soldiers of the Victorian Age*, describes the adverse comment heard on all sides as to the advisability of sending a man whose military service had virtually ended in 1839 and who had subsequently spent all his time

with civilians—albeit in most warlike circumstances—to a command in India, over the heads of many tried and tested senior officers of the Indian Army, who knew the country, the people and the Indian soldier. It did not take Sir Hugh more than a few months to prove these detractors wrong.

It was not as if he was handed ready-made implements for his task. He had great difficulties to contend with in the inferiority in numbers of his force; the lack of supplies and transport; the fact that the country through which he had to pursue his operations was only partially explored; the roads were imperfectly known and no maps or plans were available, even of such an important fortress as Jhansi. In addition the country was wild, full of rivers, ravines, stony hills and thick forests and it was entirely in the hands of the rebels.

It is reported that Sir Hugh found the soldiers of his new force a little out of hand, and he had to threaten trial by court martial for every act of insubordination and drunkenness. His first act on inspecting them at Sehere was to tell them that he would not tolerate any unsoldierly behaviour; but that if they behaved like good soldiers they would find in him the best of friends. His charm and firmness of manner must have got across because the N.C.O.s reported that the men had taken to him at once and were determined to be worthy of his praise. In a very short time he had built his Force into a corps d'élite, which performed prodigies of valour during the campaign to follow: and this was no mean feat considering the conditions under which it was fought—intense heat, hardship, forced marches and constant fighting.

To any one who reads the story of Sir Hugh's earlier career it rapidly becomes clear that he showed the same qualities in the earlier engagements and situations of danger with which he had been faced. What he did in Syria, in the Crimea, even in Ireland as a very young man, were all of the same quality; quick appreciation and speedy

action, with no thought for himself or of possible failure. Although attached to the Diplomatic Corps for so much of his earlier life, he had had to cope with many situations fraught with danger—and sometimes disaster.

In Syria, for example, a great religious feud had been going on between the Druses and the Maronites. Having been told that a conflict between the rival sects was imminent, Rose rode at once between the opposing forces, the lone representative of British power and courage, and told them to stop. They grounded their arms and dispersed.

On another occasion he saved the lives of 3,000 Christians who would have been burnt to death at Abbaye. Another time a church of great antiquity had been set on fire by the Druses. It contained the picture of its patron saint which was very precious to the local inhabitants. Rose let himself down from the burning rafters and restored the relic to the people.

But side by side with personal gallantry was his diplomatic skill, which one suspects commended itself more to his superiors. Lord Aberdeen wrote: "Colonel Rose was wounded in battle, had saved the lives of thousands of Christians, had allayed the feuds of the various sects which disturbed the peace of the country, and had caused the name of England to be honoured and respected in the East."

Rose's successful management of affairs in Syria had come to the notice of Lord Palmerston, who appointed him Secretary of Embassy in Constantinople. Here he was faced with more difficult problems. The first thing he had to do, in the absence of the Ambassador (afterwards Lord Stratford de Radclyffe), was to stop the Russians from sending Prince Menchikoff to demand from the Sultan actual protectorate over all the Porte's subjects of the Greek-Antiochan persuasion, an arrangement incompatible with the independence of Turkey and the rights of other powers. An intercepted letter disclosed the intention of Russia to foment a revolution in Bulgaria in favour of the Czar. Rose's

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N.I. were at first reluctant to join their comrades and did their best to save their British officers, which in some cases they managed to do.

The first concern of the 3rd Cavalry was to rescue their comrades from the jail and in doing so they also released the civil prisoners, many of them hardened and dangerous criminals. These latter, with the inhabitants of the city, joined in the general rioting; many atrocities were committed and women were murdered, as were most of the British officers of the Native units. And then, as darkness was falling, the mutineers, after setting fire to their own lines, disappeared in the direction of Delhi.

It was nearly midnight before British piquets were posted to protect the European bungalows; but by that time a great deal of damage and loss of life had occurred—chiefly at the hands of the civil mob. Besides Colonel Finnis, 7 officers, 3 officers' wives, two children, and every European man, woman and child in the outskirts of the cantonments were massacred.

On such occasions it is easy to be wise after the event, but it is very difficult to understand why, following the parade on the Saturday morning, no precautions were taken against a possible sepoy mutiny during the next 24 hours. And here, as in so many other cases which were to follow, the British officers of the Native units must take a large share of the blame. They should surely have known the feelings of their own men and detected the sullen rage which was smouldering in the sepoy lines following the promulgation parade.

In some cases their inaction and unwillingness to report these matters was due to a mistaken sense of loyalty to their regiments. In other cases they were so convinced that their own men would remain loyal, whatever other units might do, that they refused to accept any other possibility. And one must admit that in certain cases their views were justified—and to have thrown doubts on their

men's loyalty would have had a damaging effect. There were, however, some British officers who were quite out of touch with their men and who were entirely ignorant of their true feelings.

Lord Roberts says there was: "No suspicion amongst the officers serving with Native Regiments that discontent was universal amongst the sepoys, and that a mutiny of the whole Bengal Army was imminent. But at that time the reliance on the fidelity of the Native troops was unbounded and officers believed implicitly in the contentment and loyalty of their men. Their faith in them was extraordinary. Even after half the Native Army had mutinied, those belonging to the remaining regiments could not believe that their own particular men could be guilty of treachery."

But it is difficult to imagine that any British officers of the 3rd Light Cavalry or the 20th N.I. who visited the lines of their men on that Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning could have been in any doubt whatsoever that a mutiny was imminent; indeed one or two of them did sound the alarm but no notice was taken by the Station Commander.

It must be remembered that it was the general practice at that time for all guard duties to be performed by the Native units. This posed a particularly difficult problem in many cantonments in the early days of the Mutiny. Suddenly to relieve the Native guards by British was therefore an obvious sign of lack of trust. This was why Sir Hugh Wheeler, who was the commander in Cawnpore, decided not to make use of the magazine for the defence of the European community—because it would have involved relieving the large Native guard there. But in Meerut some security precautions should have been taken, if not on the night of the 9th then certainly first thing on the 10th. It was crass stupidity to imagine that the Native units would see 85 of their comrades degraded and incarcerated in the civil jail without creating some violent disturbance.

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In many stations the British troops were so heavily outnumbered that little could be done; but in Meerut the situation was entirely different. What is really hard to understand is the fact that on the Monday morning no active pursuit of the rebels was undertaken, especially as the General had a regiment of cavalry and some artillery as part of his garrison. It was because the rebels reached Delhi unscathed, triumphant and free from pursuit, that the situation there exploded with such ferocity and with such dire consequences.

In contrast to Meerut, with its strong British contingent, Delhi was garrisoned entirely by Indian troops, the 38th, 54th and 74th Native Infantry, with a battery of Indian artillery. They were situated in the cantonment, about three miles outside the city.

3

Monday, 11th May, was just another day to Lieut. George Willoughby of the Bengal Artillery, who was in charge of the great magazine in Delhi. No news of the Meerut mutiny had reached him; but very soon eye-witness reports began to come in that the mutineers were even then streaming across the river; and by the time the reports had been verified they had actually entered the Palace Gate.

The magazine at Delhi was in the city and it contained two complete siege-trains, brand new field guns, shells, powder, rifles, and vast quantities of cartridges. Willoughby, a quiet, steadfast type of man, realised at once that the magazine would be the first objective of the mutineers.

Willoughby's eight assistants, Lieutenants Forrest and Raynor, Sergeants Stuart and Edwards, and Conductors Buckley, Shaw, Scully and Crowe were British; all the rest of the establishment were Native. It soon became obvious

that the Native element was not to be trusted and the nine Englishmen prepared themselves to fight if necessary to the last, and even to blow up the magazine rather than let it fall into the hands of the rebels. The outer gates were closed and barricaded and the guns were brought out, placed in position and loaded with grape. Then a trail of gunpowder was laid from the powder magazine so that if further defence appeared hopeless the magazine could be blown.

Whilst these preparations were in progress a summons to surrender came in the name of the King of Delhi, Bahadur Shah, who had lived in seclusion in the Palace within the city for many years, his title being purely honorary. But he was a descendent of the Great Moguls and his prestige with the Indians was considerable, so it was natural that the rebels should persuade him to put himself at their head. To this demand for surrender, however, Willoughby gave no reply.

As soon as the mutineers began to climb the walls with scaling ladders the Native element started going over to the enemy. Willoughby let them go. Soon the mutineers were pouring down a murderous fire on to the nine defenders. Seeing that further resistance was hopeless Lieut. Willoughby gave Conductor Scully the signal to fire. With a terrific roar, which shook the whole of Delhi, the great magazine exploded. Stuart, Edwards, Shaw, Scully and Crowe were never seen again; Willoughby was killed a little later on, in the retreat from Delhi, but three of the others—Forrest, Raynor and Buckley—escaped in the confusion and were subsequently awarded the V.C. This was a very gallant little episode, particularly when it is remembered that the nine defenders were middle-aged men, employed on sedentary work such as accounting and the issue of stores.

Meanwhile in Delhi the most horrible atrocities were taking place and very few of the Europeans, Eurasians and Indian Christians, who happened to be in the city, escaped from the frenzy of the mutineers and the mob.

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To recapture Delhi without delay became the supreme priority of British strategy. British prestige had suffered a shattering blow. But, though no time was wasted in mobilising a field force for the recapture of Delhi, and great heroism was displayed by the British investing forces, it took four months to effect a successful assault on the Indian capital. And during those four months the British cause passed through some very dark and anxious days in other parts of India, the most important being Cawnpore and Lucknow.

The story of the Mutiny is not a pleasant one. The constant anxiety of the British was for the safety of their women and children; the brutal killings of civilians in the early days had roused the British troops to white hot feelings of revenge, which sometimes resulted in horrible retaliation; and of course mutiny was an offence punishable by death. On both sides there were deeds of great gallantry; and, on the part of British women, in conditions of appalling heat and danger, almost unbelievable heroism.

4

Cawnpore was the headquarters of a division commanded by Sir Hugh Wheeler, an elderly but energetic and able general of the Indian Army. When the news of Meerut and Delhi reached him he at once started to make preparations for the safety of the large European community in Cawnpore. The local garrison comprised four Native regiments—three infantry and one cavalry; and the British troops amounted to only 60 invalid gunners. Later, small detachments—mostly sick men—arrived from Allahabad. But the total white combatants, many of them too ill to stand, and including the British officers of the Native regiments, amounted to less than 300 men. Cawnpore contained an unusually large proportion of British women and children

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as it had long been used as a residential area for families of troops employed on the frontier or in non-family stations in the neighbourhood.

The magazine, which was at the eastern end of the European residential area, conveniently near to the river, contained large quantities of guns, ammunition and other military stores. It was a large, solid building with ample space to accommodate the entire European community in reasonable comfort. It appeared ideal therefore from every point of view—except one. The magazine was in charge of a sepoy guard. The General thought that if he attempted to replace this guard by a British one it would cause an immediate mutiny of all the Native troops; in which case the scattered Europeans would be massacred before they could be assembled in the magazine. He also hoped that, when the inevitable mutiny did occur, the sepoys might march away to Delhi—as had happened over the Meerut mutineers.

In the light of after events General Wheeler made the wrong decision; but it is always easy to be wise after the event. It would have been much better if he had boldly seized the magazine. Anyway, he left it in the sepoys' hands and started to dig an earth work round two large barracks, formerly used by a British regiment. One of these buildings had a thatched roof and both of them were within close rifle range of other buildings. These proved to be very grave disadvantages when the siege began.

Day by day the work on the entrenchment continued under the very noses of the sepoys. Indian contractors were engaged to stock the enclosure with a month's provisions. It was a fantastic and rather macabre situation. And during these weeks the European community of Cawnpore endured the same agony of suspense as the British garrisons of many other stations had to suffer.

The behaviour of the British officers of the Native regiments was quite magnificent. Each night they slept in the lines with their men, knowing that every night might be

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northern portion of the district has a surface of black cotton soil, which becomes impassable after heavy rain, but in the summer is baked hard by the intense heat of the sun and cracks into innumerable fissures.

The city of Jhansi, the capital of the province, lies today on the main road and railway between Bombay and Delhi; but at this time no railways existed. Jhansi lies 142 miles south of Agra and 250 miles south of Delhi.

The city fort, which contained the Royal Palace of Jhansi, was built on a steep-sided rock whence it commanded the whole of the surrounding country. Its great strength, natural as well as artificial, and its extent, entitled it to a place amongst the great fortresses of the world. It was built of massive masonry, its walls varying in thickness from 16 to 20 feet. It was surrounded on all sides by the city of Jhansi, except on the west and part of the north face. The city was about four and half miles in circumference and was surrounded by a fortified and massive wall from 6 to 12 feet thick and varying in height from 18 to 30 feet, with numerous flanking bastions. The cantonments, as was customary, lay a short distance from the town, with a lesser fort, known as the Star Fort, in which was situated the magazine. The people of Jhansi were traditionally brave and warlike.

In 1817 the British Government concluded a treaty with the then Raja of Jhansi, Ramchandra Rao, that he and his heirs and successors should be the hereditary rulers of the principality. In 1835 Ramchandra Rao died without child, and his widow then adopted Krishna Rao, a son of her sister. As the adoption of a boy of another family was invalid, the succession was contested and the Government of India decided in favour of Raghunath Rao, the deceased ruler's uncle. This man was worthless and dissolute and his misrule brought the state to the brink of ruin. Raghunath Rao also died without legitimate issue and the succession was again disputed. The British Government gave their verdict in favour of Gangadhar Rao, the only surviving

brother of the last Maharaja. But Gangadha Rao was not invested with ruling powers until 1843.

Gangadhar Rao was a good and popular ruler but he had no direct heir to the throne which caused his people considerable anxiety. His first wife had died without bearing a child and the Maharaja had been so devoted to her that he showed no desire to marry again. In May 1842 however he married a young girl of about fourteen or fifteen, which was somewhat above the usual marriage age for a Hindu girl. She was of pleasing appearance, without being beautiful, and of sturdy physique—an important asset for a bride of those days when child-bearing was fraught with so many hazards. She was also reputed to be of strong personality. The new Rani came of a good but humble Mahratta family. According to some sources her father's name was Moropant Tambe, the son of an officer in the Mahratta army. He became chief adviser to Chumaji Appa, a brother of the last Peshwa, Baji Rao II. When Chimaji went to live in Benares, after the death of Baji Rao, Moropant and his family accompanied him. Moropant's wife was a beautiful woman by the name of Bhagirathi. They had one child, whom they called Manakarnika. On her marriage she took the name of Lakshmibai.

The wedding of the Maharaja and his new bride was celebrated with befitting splendour and they went on a honeymoon pilgrimage to Benares and other neighbouring places which Lakshmibai had known as a child.

In due course the Rani gave birth to a son which naturally gave cause for great satisfaction and rejoicing amongst their people. But three months later the child died, which again left the State in the dangerous position of having no heir to the throne. As the years passed and there was no sign of further progeny appearing the Maharaja considered adopting an heir, but was hesitant about doing so in view of the attitude to such matters taken by the new Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie.

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As a result of his worries about the future of his State, and his natural disappointment at not being able to produce another child, Gangadhar Rao grew moody and irritable and eventually fell seriously ill. One cannot help being struck by the lack of fertility of these Indian potentates; but when one considers that many of them were riddled with malaria and other diseases, the possible inadequacy of their diets, the fact that their brides were often mere children, and many other factors, it is more understandable. Also the infant mortality rate was very high so that if a child was produced its chances of survival were not all that good.

In November 1853 Gangadhar Rao died without an heir. But the day before his death he adopted a boy from another branch of his family in the presence of Major Ellis, Political Agent of Jhansi, and Captain Martin, together with many other State officials. The adoption took place on 19th November with full traditional and religious ceremony. The boy was given the new name of Damodar. He was five years old.

Gangadhar Rao commended his widow and the child to the care of the Government and "prayed the Government to treat the child with kindness. The administration of the State should be vested in my widow during her lifetime as the sovereign of this principality and mother of the child adopted." Major Ellis supported the plea, but Major Malcolm, the Governor-General's Agent, was of a different opinion. It was contrary to policy.

Lord Dalhousie, who had been appointed Governor-General of India in 1847, had stated quite plainly that the aim of his policy was to consolidate the Anglo-Indian Empire by the absorption of the native states; to eradicate every remnant of native barbarism that he could reach, and upon the ground thus cleared to erect a brand new fabric of Western civilisation. Lord Dalhousie had announced therefore that the British Government was bound not to put

aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as might from time to time present themselves; "whether they arise from the lapse of subordinate states by the failure of all heirs of every description whatsoever, or from the failure of heirs natural, where the succession can be sustained only by the sanction of the Government being given to the ceremony of adoption according to Hindoo law. . . . I hold that on all occasions, where heirs natural shall fail, the territory should be made to lapse, and adoption should not be permitted, excepting in those cases in which some strong political reason may render it expedient to depart from this general rule."

It was by the exercise of this right of lapse that Dalhousie annexed Satara, Nagpur, Jhansi and several other minor principalities. There is of course considerable doubt as to whether these annexations were legal—or wise—and it is interesting to note that the massacres of Cawnpore and of Jhansi may have been caused by the bitter resentment felt by the Nana Sahib and the Rani of Jhansi, although the case of the former was the refusal of a pension to an adopted son rather than to an annexation.

Lord Dalhousie ruled against the prayer of Gangadhar Rao and his widow; and, in March 1854, Jhansi was incorporated into the British Indian dominion. A life pension of 60,000 rupees was settled on the Rani and she was permitted to live in the city palace. She was exempted from the jurisdiction of the British courts and during her lifetime her personal retinue was also to enjoy the same privilege.

The Rani at first refused to accept the pension, but when she was eventually persuaded to take it she found that it was subject to so many deductions, including those on account of the late Maharaja's death. Since his estate was valued at 6 lakhs of rupees, and none of this was to be used to pay off his debts, this seemed very unfair. The adoption of Damodar had not been negatived and this sum was to be held in trust for him; it was only his succession

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to the throne which had been disallowed; so Lord Dalhousie was getting the best of both worlds. This may have seemed a small thing to him, looking at the broad picture of India as a whole, but to the Rani it was yet another injustice.

However, the Rani still hoped that if her case was properly represented to the Court of Ministers, justice would be done to herself and her adopted son; so, like other dispossessed princes before her, she sent her agents to London. The mission cost her a great deal of money; but the Directors found no reason to revise the ruling of the Governor-General.

Major Malcolm, the Governor-General's Agent, who was supervising the transfer of the Jhansi administration to British hands, in a memo to Calcutta recommending suitable terms, said of the Rani: "She bears a very high character and is much respected by everyone in Jhansi." The State of Jhansi had been faithful and loyal to the British and, though Major Malcolm had not supported the succession of the adopted boy, Damodar, it seems evident that he felt the Rani ought to be fairly treated, and recommended accordingly. Nevertheless, Lord Dalhousie continued to argue that Jhansi had never been an independent State¹ and that its people would benefit from British rule; nor did he see fit to accept all Malcolm's recommendations.

Other grievances however combined to render the Rani hostile to the British Government. Prior to November 1854 the slaughter of cattle, which had not been permitted in Jhansi under Brahmin rule, was now to be permitted—despite the strong objections of the Rani. This really did seem a case where the British went out of their way to offend the sentiments and religious beliefs of the local people. And there were other minor irritants of a like nature.

Lakshmibai had quietly left her late husband's palace in

¹ In the days of the Peshwa Jhansi was a "Subadar's" or Governor's province. The East India Company raised it to the status of a kingdom.

the fort and moved to the residence in the city which had been assigned to her by the British Government. For the next three years her life was uneventful. But she was steadily endearing herself to her people and fanning their resentment against the British for depriving them of their independence. Her troops had been disbanded and the 12th Native Infantry of the Bengal Army garrisoned the fort, together with a detachment of artillery and a wing of the 14th Irregular Cavalry. The garrison consisted entirely of Native troops, with of course their British officers. Captain Alexander Skene was appointed as Political Officer in charge of the State and Captain Dunlop commanded the garrison.

In May 1857 the news of the mutinies in Meerut and Delhi arrived in Jhansi; but Captain Dunlop and his officers saw no sign of disquiet amongst their own men. Indeed Captain Skene wrote in a report to his superior expressing perfect confidence that there was nothing to be feared from the people or from the troops. His trust in the Rani appeared complete and he readily agreed when she asked to enlist a body of armed men for her own protection. The troops in Jhansi had used the "greased" cartridge without demur but soon there were ominous signs that all was not as well as appeared on the surface.

Although Captain Skene has been blamed for his complacency he may well have been faced with the same unpleasant dilemma which had confronted other commanders in small stations where there was a great preponderance of Native troops. We have already seen how much more important commanders, in Meerut, Delhi and Lucknow, faced the same dilemma and decided, wrongly, to trust their troops and hope for the best. But Skene had strong warnings towards the end of May that a mutiny was imminent in Jhansi and was advised that precautionary measures should be taken regarding the Star Fort and magazine. He was given these warnings by Captain Gordon, who had taken charge of the District on 24th May. But Skene

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believed that any move of this kind would bring on a mutiny at once. His decision was wrong. He may have been ill-advised: but anyway, he left it too late, although he may have been right in thinking that any move on his part would set off the spark. The spark was already there, waiting to be set alight.

On the 1st June two bungalows in the military cantonment were destroyed by fire, which had been the signal for mutiny in Meerut and several other places. Then, on the afternoon of the 3rd June, a portion of the 12th N.I., under a non-commissioned officer, broke out into open mutiny and seized the Star Fort, a walled enclosure within the cantonment, containing the magazine and all the treasure. They were joined by the artillery, with the only two guns in the detachment. Express messages were at once sent to Gwalior and Cawnpore asking for help, though it did not seem very likely that any help would be forthcoming.

In Jhansi cantonment there were only 9 British people. Captain Dunlop, the military commander, had with him his two officers, Lieutenants Taylor and Campbell; Lieutenant Turnbull, attached to the Survey; Quartermaster-Sergeant Newton, with his wife and two children; and Conductor Reilly. The rest of the white community lived in the Civil Station, except for Captain Skene and the District Magistrate, Captain F. D. Gordon, whose bungalows were inside the city. All of these Europeans and Anglo-Indians were ordered by Captain Skene to go to the city fort before nightfall.

Gordon ordered the police to garrison the fort, which they did. Captain Dunlop and other military officers still hoped to keep the rest of the Native troops steady and they slept in the lines. This was in keeping with the courage and dedication to duty which had characterised so many other British officers of Native troops in similar troublous and dangerous situations at this time.

THE REBELLIOUS RANI

On the morning of 6th June Skene and Gordon visited Captain Dunlop in the lines, after which the two former returned to the fort. Dunlop however was by then in no doubt that the situation was critical and he appealed to the two nearby States of Datia and Tehri for help.

About this time a large number of people, amongst whom were the Rani's two principal adherents, bearing two flags, proceeded from the town of Jhansi towards the cantonment and on their arrival in the lines one, Ahsan Ali, called all the Mahommedans to prayer. The troops then mutinied. Only two Havildars of the 12th Bengal N.I. remained loyal and stood by Captain Dunlop and Lieuts. Campbell and Turnbull. These three British officers and their two Native supporters were shot down and killed. But Lieut. Taylor, though severely wounded, escaped on horseback to the fort. Some accounts say that it was Lieut. Campbell who escaped and not Lieut. Taylor.

The mutineers then released the prisoners from the jail, set fire to a number of buildings in the cantonment and engaged in an orgy of loot and plunder, after which they entered the city and seized all the British supporters. The fort was then closely blockaded and attacked with a gun, only a few of the Native servants remaining with their European masters.

During the night of 6th June a meeting was held between the mutineers and the Rani's supporters to decide who was to be the ruler of Jhansi and also what was to be done about the European garrison. The question of the Government of the State was not then settled. But it was decided that the British garrison should die, though some were in favour of letting them go free. The mutineers also decided to send for Sadasheo Rao Narayan Parolwola, a relative of the late Raja of Jhansi, with a view to making him the future ruler. So it was evident that the majority of the mutineers were not in favour of having the Rani, whether because she was a woman, or because they feared she would be too

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soft towards the British, is not clear. Sadasheo Rao arrived on 8th June and encamped in the mutineers' lines, close to the Star Fort.

On the morning of 7th June Mr. Scott and the two Purcells—all of whom were from the Deputy Commissioners office—were sent by Captain Skene to the Rani to request protection. They were met by the Rani's troops and taken to her palace, whence they were taken to the lines of the mutineers and put to death. There is no evidence that they ever saw the Rani. Subsequently Mr. Andrews, who had left the fort, was seized and killed by the Rani's servants.

About 2 p.m. an attack was made on the fort in which none of the garrison were hurt but some of the rebels were killed. The attack was renewed next morning when an attempted escalade was repulsed. But towards evening on the 8th the rebels gained possession of the lower works of the fort. Some of the Natives inside the fort then attempted to open one of the gates to admit the rebels. But his act of treachery was repulsed by Captains Gordon and Burgess; in the fracas however Lieut. Powis was mortally wounded. Shortly afterwards Captain Francis Gordon was shot through the head. He had been the life and soul of the garrison and his death was an irreparable disaster and lowered their morale to zero.

Captain Skene then made signals that he was ready to surrender. The rebels—some accounts say through the medium of Saleh Mohammed, a native doctor, and others that it was through Lal Bahadur, Subadar, and Bakshish Ali, the jail Darogah—promised on all their most sacred oaths that the garrison would be allowed to depart in safety from the fort if they laid down their arms. The gates were thrown open and the British and Eurasians filed out, but they were immediately made prisoners and bound. They were then taken through the city towards the Star Fort; but on reaching Joka Bagh, just outside the city walls, a message arrived from the leader of the Jhansi mutineers,

Risaldar Kala Khan, that they should all be put to death.

No further invitation was needed and a general massacre then took place, led by Bakshish Ali, who had been the prime mover in the decision to kill the garrison at the conference on the night of 6th June. Captain Skene was immediately cut down. Mrs. McEgan, attempting to save her husband, threw her arms around him, but was beaten and pushed aside, and Dr. McEgan was cut down and killed. Mrs. McEgan cast herself on his body and was there killed also. Miss Browne fell on her knees before a sepoy and begged for her life, but he killed her ruthlessly. And then all the men, the wives and their children were cruelly slaughtered—except Mrs. Mutlow, who had earlier concealed herself, disguised in native dress, and was subsequently rescued in the taking of Jhansi: and Mr. Crawford, an East India Clerk, who escaped from the fort during the night of the 7/8th June.

The bodies of the murdered men, women and children were left exposed for three days on the high road and then thrown into gravel pits and covered over. The total number of victims was 30 men, 16 women and 20 children. (Vide Appendix I.)

It was somewhat ironic that, on 5th June, 1857, the commander in Jhansi should have asked for help from Cawnpore, where the situation was already becoming desperate. The massacre in Jhansi was shortly to be repeated there on a bigger and even more ghastly scale.

The Jhansi mutineers left for Delhi on 11th June, plundering and looting as they went.

In all fairness to the Rani it must be stated that there was considerable doubt as to whether she had given her support to the Jhansi massacre. She may possibly have given her word to the garrison that if they surrendered the fort they would have safe conduct under escort to another station. Colonel Malleson says that there must have been a written safe conduct, signed by the Rani, or the garrison



Above, The Executive Council and Secretaries of Lord Lawrence's Government. From left to right (standing): E. H. Lushington, General Sir Henry Norman, Sir Henry Marion Durand, Sir Edward Clive Bayley, General Sir Richard Strachey; (sitting): Noble Taylor, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Sir Hugh Rose (later Lord Strathmairn), Lord Lawrence, Lord Napier of Magdala, Sir Henry Sumner Maine, Sir William Grey; below, Jhansi, the Jokaan Bagh, scene of the massacre of June 6th, 1857





Hyderabad Contingent: *above*, Foot Artillery, 3rd Infantry; *below*, Camel Gunner, 3rd Cavalry



A native officer of the
Hyderabad Contingent,
3rd Cavalry, in full
dress



Bengal Infantry, 65th
Regiment



Above, the Mausoleum at Orchha, near Jhansi; below, the Poncha Gate at Jhansi



TROUBLE IN JHANSI

would never have accepted it. But there are two points here which need consideration. Firstly, the garrison really had no option but to surrender; secondly, the fact that the Rani had offered a safe conduct would not necessarily mean that she was a party to its not being honoured. No one has suggested that the Rani was actually present when the massacre took place. We have seen that there was some divergence of view between the supporters of the Rani and the mutineers with regard to the future of Jhansi. It would not be surprising therefore if the matter of the killing of all the prisoners was taken out of her hands. It does not seem to be quite in character for the Rani to have *ordered* the massacre herself, though she may have known of it and been powerless to prevent it. She was determined however to be ruler of Jhansi and she would not have let an argument about the killing of the garrison stand in her way.

The probable answer is that she had intrigued with the rebels and then found that she was powerless to control the course of events. The massacre would have occurred with or without the approval of the Rani. Had she tried to oppose it she would have been a dead duck; as it was she survived to become a rebellious Rani.

CHAPTER TWO

The Rani's Brief Rule

DESPITE THE very bad odour in which the Rani was regarded as a result of the barbarous massacre of all the Europeans in Jhansi, she still tried to make her peace with the British. She wrote to Major W. C. Erskine, Commissioner and Agent, Lieutenant Governor, Saugor District, the very same day that the rebels left for Delhi, on 12th June.¹ Her letter ran as follows: "The Govt. forces, stationed at Jhansi, thro' their faithlessness, cruelty and violence, killed all the European Civil and Military officers, the clerks and all their families and the Ranee not being able to assist them for want of Guns, and soldiers as she had only 100 or 50 people engaged in guarding her house she could render them no aid, which she very much regrets. That they, the mutineers, afterwards behaved with much violence against herself and servants, and extorted a great deal of money from her, and said that as the Ranee was entitled to succeed the Riyasat, she should undertake the management since the sepoy were proceeding to Delhi to the King. That her dependence was entirely on the British authorities who met with such a misfortune the Sepoys knowing her to be quite helpless sent her message thro' the Tehseeldar of Jhansie, the Revenue and Judicial Seristadars of the Deputy Com-

¹ Foreign Secret Consultations No. 354, 31st July, 1857.

THE RANI'S BRIEF RULE

missioner's and Superintendent's Courts to the effect that if she, at all hesitated to comply with their requests, they would blow up her palace with guns. Taking into consideration her position she was obliged to consent to all the requests made and put up with a great deal of annoyance, and had to pay large sums in property, as well as in cash to save her life and honour. Knowing that no British officers had been spared in the whole District, she was, in consideration of the welfare and protection of the people, and the District, induced to address Perwannahs to all the Govt. subordinate Agency in the shape of Police etc. to remain at their posts and perform their duties as usual, she is in continual dread of her own life and that of the inhabitants. It was proper that the report of all this should have been made immediately, but the disaffected allowed her no opportunity of doing so. As they have this day proceeded towards Delhi, she loses no time in writing."

On 14th June she wrote again to say: "That it is quite beyond her power to make any arrangement for the safety of the District as the measures would require funds, which she does not possess, nor will the Mahajuns in times like these lend her money. Up to the present time after selling her own personal property and suffering much inconvenience she has managed to save the town from being plundered and has kept up the form of the late Govt. she has entertained many people for the protection of the Town and Mofussil outposts, but without a competent Govt. Force and funds she sees the impossibility of holding on any further, she has therefore written out some remarks on the state of the district which is also sent herewith and trusts she may be favoured with orders which she will see carried out."

Of course these letters offer no proof that she was either innocent or guilty. If she was guilty, once the rebel sepoys had left, it was obvious policy to blame it all onto them and try to put herself in the clear with the British. She was in a very isolated position. Jhansi was left relatively

defenceless—except for the strength of its fortifications. There were virtually no troops, guns, ammunition or any other necessities of war. She had many enemies around her, including Sadasheo Rao, who wanted her throne. It may well be true that the mutineers had extorted money from her by threats: on the other hand it is also claimed that she bought them off by gifts of money from supporting the rival claims of Sadasheo Rao.

But if she was innocent then her natural course of action was equally to write to the British and explain what had happened. Certainly Erskine himself showed no sign of disbelieving her and even wrote in his forwarding letter that the Rani's account agreed with what he had heard from other sources. In fact, throughout these controversial dealings with the Rani, it is noticeable that the British men who knew her best all agreed to some extent or another that she was more sinned against than sinning; which may simply have been a reflection of the Rani's charms and powers of persuasion—or of her obvious innocence.

Erskine told the Rani, "to collect the Revenue, to raise Police and to do everything in her power to restore order and that accounts will be settled with her when Officers reach Jhansi when she will be liberally dealt with, and I have also sent her a proclamation to issue calling on all inhabitants of the Districts to obey the Ranee agreeable to the custom of the British Govt. who will for a time make proper arrangements."

The Governor-General only gave conditional approval to Erskine's action. G. F. Edmonstone, Secretary to the Government of India wrote to Erskine: "In respect of the Ranee I am to state that though his Lordship in Council does not blame you for accepting in the circumstances in which you were placed her account of her own proceedings and sentiments, and entrusting to her the management of the Jhansee Territory on behalf of the British Government yet this circumstance will not protect her if her account should turn out to be false."

THE RANI'S BRIEF RULE

So the Rani must have been well aware that she was only "on approval" so to speak because the British were not yet ready to deal with her. Jhansi however had become a byword for treachery and brutality and all the cards were stacked against her. She was suspected by the Government of India as a dangerous and criminal leader. But her time was not yet. They had other and more pressing problems before they could tackle Jhansi.

Meanwhile the Rani sought to rule her kingdom to the best of her ability; but always at the back of her mind was the knowledge that British vengeance would come upon her in the end, and she was determined to meet the challenge when it came with both courage and resource. She adopted as her official dress the close-fitting riding breeches—known as Jodpurs—which were generally worn by many of her male subjects. She wore a silk blouse with a cummerbund—or belt—in which she carried a diamond studded sword. On her head she wore a cap with a silk turban. Sometimes she wore a pair of loose trousers with a couple of pistols in her belt. In fact, it was as if she was proclaiming by her dress that the time for femininity was over; everything was now to be directed towards the target—the defence of Jhansi and her own neck.

But the British were not her only enemies. After the death of her husband the succession had been claimed by Sadasheo Rao of Parola; and he had had some support from the mutineers. After their departure to Delhi and the overthrow of British authority he thought that he could succeed in his aim without much difficulty. He managed to assemble some troops and seized the fort at Karera, about 30 miles from Jhansi. Here he proclaimed himself Maharaja of Jhansi. The Rani however went for him like a tiger and twice defeated his forces. He was taken prisoner and lodged in the fort at Jhansi.

She then had to face some more formidable foes. The Bundelas were a local warlike race who were always ready

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to take up arms. They regarded the Mahrattas as interlopers in Bundelkhand and they had long awaited an opportunity to re-assert their authority in Jhansi and neighbouring districts which had once belonged to them. They had already shown their lukewarmness to the British when, on 6th June, Captain Gordon had appealed from Jhansi to the Bundela States of Orchha and Datia for help—which they made no effort to give.

When the British in Jhansi had been disposed of, the rebel sepoys had left and Sadasheo Rao was in prison, the Dewan of Orchha sent a formidable force, under General Nathe Khan, to capture Jhansi. The Dewan is said to have offered the Rani the same pension as the British had offered if she would surrender the fortress and go quietly. All these men thought the Rani, a mere woman, would be easy game.

The Rani however had other ideas, although she had as yet few troops and was very badly off for military stores and ammunition. This was a test of her powers of leadership and of her ability to resist the assault of the British, which she knew was certain to come. She knew that if she could not deal with Orchha she would have little chance of rallying her forces against the greater threat later on. She acted with the greatest energy and summoned to her help the people of the Jhansi district and many of the surrounding noblemen. They rallied their own forces and Jhansi became a military camp.

When Nathe Khan's army arrived within sight of Jhansi the Rani rode out in front of her troops. She wisely drew the enemy on well within range of her fortress artillery which then opened fire with devastating effect. Nathe Khan's troops fled in disorder and the Rani gained a crushing victory.

This raised her own status and the morale of her people and her forces sky-high. Some of them had naturally been doubtful of the capacity of a young woman to lead troops in battle, however strong their personal regard for her may have been. Now all their doubts were resolved.

THE RANI'S BRIEF RULE

Following the defeat of the Orchha attack in August 1857 Jhansi was at peace. The Rani was under no illusions that this would last indefinitely. Even if there were no further attacks from Orchha and Datia she knew that, as things were developing in other parts of India, the British would eventually get the upper hand—and then her big trial would come.

The great weakness of the Mutiny was in the higher command and leadership of the rebels. Had this been otherwise the Rani of Jhansi, and her growing number of troops, would undoubtedly have been incorporated in some over-all plan of attack, or defence. As it was she was out on her own. But she absolutely refused to allow any ideas of false security to cloud the issues which she saw so clearly. That was the fault of so many of the other rebel leaders: they thought that one victory necessarily insured another. The Rani was determined to make the best possible use of the respite she had gained. She enlisted troops, cast cannon, and manufactured other munitions of war; and she also sought new allies. Amongst these were the rebel Rajas of Banpur and Shahgur and many mutineers from various regiments of the Indian Army. And in the midst of all these military preparations she gave great attention to the administration of her people.

Meanwhile it was becoming more obvious every day that the British were getting the upper hand over the mutineers. Although the rebel resistance in Oudh was hard to break the embers of revolt were gradually being stamped out. But, with Delhi recaptured and the issue almost decided in Oudh, the main task was now to stamp out resistance in Central India. And one of the main obstacles to be overcome was the Rebellious Rani of Jhansi who had become such a fabulous figure among the rebels.

Typical of the Rani's qualities of leadership and imagination was the way she gave special care to the enlistment of women. They were enlisted as troopers and gunners and

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when war came to Jhansi they fought side by side with the men, took on sentry duties, carried ammunition and cared for the wounded.

In order to strengthen her hold over the women and increase their standing as members of the community and of her armed forces the Rani gave great importance to the annual ceremony of Halaudi-Kunku. This ceremony, in honour of the Goddess Lakshmi, was for women only. The Rani invited to the palace almost all the women in Jhansi city. No distinctions of class or rank were observed. The ceremony continued throughout the whole of one afternoon and evening, the Rani, in a beautiful snow-white sari, moving amongst her guests. The gathering was a great success and the people of Jhansi felt uplifted and ready to face whatever might befall.

Before the storm broke however the Rani made one last effort to talk peace with the British Government. But the response was cold. The memory of the massacre had not been dulled by the passage of time but had smouldered fiercely under the surface. She realised that she had only one course open—to fight to a finish.

CHAPTER THREE

The Muster

FOR THE pacification of Central India Sir Robert Hamilton was appointed as the Governor-General's Agent and he was asked to draw up a plan of campaign. Sir Robert had been on home leave when the Mutiny began but he at once asked to be allowed to return to India when he realised how serious the situation was going to be.

Sir Robert's plan was as follows: He proposed that two columns should co-operate in the operation. One column, coming from the Bombay Presidency and based on Mhow, should sweep the country between that point and Kalpi on the River Jumna, reconquering Jhansi in its course. The second column, coming from Madras and based on Jubbulpore, would clear the line of communications with Allahabad and Mirzapur and cross Bundelkhand to Banda. Thus Kalpi and Banda would constitute the points towards which the two columns should be separately directed.

The column based on Jubbulpore was to be commanded by Brigadier-General Whitlock. The officer appointed to command the column based on Mhow, which was to have the task of retaking Jhansi, was Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, K.C.B. (afterwards Lord Strathnairn), who had arrived in India for the first time in September 1857 and assumed command of the newly styled Central India Field Force two months later.

Sir Hugh was a man in his middle fifties. Brave, resource-

ful and energetic, he was well fitted for the difficult task which had been assigned to him. And although he was ignorant of the conditions and the terrain he brought a fresh mind and a fit and healthy body to the problem. Long residence in India—particularly in those days when medical knowledge was somewhat scanty and such tropical diseases as malaria, dysentery and enteric fever were rife—did not necessarily make for energetic and inspired leadership. Sir Hugh's tactics and strategy were entirely new. He won his battles by a mixture of dash and determination. He used the intelligent co-operation of all arms—cavalry, artillery and infantry—and he was never rigid either in his planning or its execution. He proved himself to be an outstanding commander.

Sir Hugh's Force consisted of two brigades, the first of which was assembled at Mhow and the second at Sehore. Their total strength amounted to some 4,300 men—the majority being Native troops. They were composed as follows:
1st Brigade—commanded by Brigadier C. S. Stuart, Bombay Infantry (afterwards Sir Charles Stuart, K.C.B.)

1 Squadron 14th Light Dragoons

1 Troop 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry

2 Cavalry Regiments Hyderabad Contingent

86th Regiment British Infantry

25th Bombay Infantry

Detachment 21st Company R.E.

2 Light Field Batteries Artillery

1 Infantry Regiment Hyderabad Contingent Field Force.

The 25th Regiment Native Infantry (afterwards the 125th Napier's Rifles) were formed under this nomenclature on 16th September, 1826, with 23 British officers, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Taylor. The Regiment had a major as second-in-command, five captains, ten lieutenants and six ensigns. The outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857 found the 25th at Poona and it is to the eternal honour of the regiment that, despite the mutinies of so many other Native

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regiments all around them, not a sepoy in the 25th was affected. They formed part of the Malwa Field Force and received "the approbation of the Government" for their services in that operation. They then became part of Sir Hugh Rose's Force—where they once more renewed their association with their old friends, the 86th British Infantry Regiment!

It is interesting also to look back a little at the past history of the 86th Foot. The 83rd and 86th Battalions of the Line were raised in 1794; and in 1881 they became the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Royal Irish Rifles. On the 12th March, 1842, the 86th were under orders to proceed to India, and their establishment was made up to 48 officers, and 1,066 warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men, exclusive of the Depot Company which remained at home. The Regiment was formed into ten Service companies. To bring them up to strength they received drafts of 291 men from six other regiments.

The 86th embarked for India in five different ships, four of which sailed on 2nd May and one on 27th. Most of the men had had to embark a week before their ships sailed. The Regimental records note with pride that only 23 desertions took place in the 19 days prior to sailing. Nowadays that would have been considered very bad: but in those days it was exceptionally good. In 1842 India seemed a whole world away and there were slender chances of getting home on leave—or indeed of returning at all—chiefly owing to the wastage rate from sickness. Several officers were absent without leave, including one Lieut.-Colonel, who arrived in time to embark on the last vessel to sail, *The Eliza Stewart*. The probable explanation of these officers being absent was the slowness of the posts and official delays. Two of them were allowed to proceed to India "overland". The actual embarkation strength was finally 33 officers, 1,052 N.C.O.s and men, and 152 children—for the families went with them.

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The first ship to arrive in India was the *Inglis* which reached Bombay on 30th July, having left England on 14th May—a period of 77 days. This was one of the quickest voyages on record. The last ship did not arrive until the 25th September. It took therefore four months to convey the Regiment to India—a very long, hot, grim and uncomfortable business. The passengers in the first ship had 30 cases of cholera soon after their arrival in Bombay. Between 1st August and 31st October 2 officers, 94 N.C.O.s and men, 13 women and 29 children on the strength of the Regiment died—about two thirds of them from cholera. Casualties from sickness, heatstroke and sunstroke were heavy and a constant stream of officers and men had to be sent out from England to keep the Regiment up to strength.

In 1845 they were involved in the Sikh War, where their casualties were mostly from sickness. In the three years 1844-46 the total deaths in the Regiment amongst N.C.O.s and men were 391—and 106 children. Yet by the end of December 1847 the Regiment was 71 above strength. These figures demonstrate most forcibly the problems which faced the Government in those days of sending British troops to India and in keeping them up to strength.

Both the 83rd and the 86th were engaged in the Indian Mutiny from its commencement. When the Mutiny started the 86th had their Right wing at Aden and their Left in Bombay. They were concentrated as soon as possible in Bombay and operated in the Bombay Presidency. The Government of Bombay were desperately short of British troops and welcomed the return of the Right wing of the 86th, which arrived back there on the 8th July. The Regiment was at once required to send detachments to deal with mutinous situations in three different places.

One detachment, consisting of 8 officers and 231 men, marched from Bombay to Mhow. This was a very trying affair in view of the moist heat and incessant rain which had flooded large areas of the countryside. No tents could

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be pitched and the troops had to bivouac en route as best they could. This resulted in many casualties from sickness including 7 deaths from cholera. The second detachment of 200 men left Bombay for Poona. They experienced the same trying weather conditions but had only one death—also from cholera.

On the 8th August the headquarters of the Regiment, with the remaining three Companies, were ordered to Belgaum. Embarking in a small ship called the *Victoria* they steamed down the west coast of India. An officer of the 86th wrote: "We were packed like pigs in an Irish boat. It was impossible to go below, and on deck it rained as if the windows of heaven had been opened to pour down their waters upon us. I should think every man on board was seasick."

This cargo of misery stopped on 10th August at a town called Ratnagiri. The 27th had one wing in this town and the other in Belgaum. The half-regiment at Ratnagiri had mutinied and had killed two of their British officers. Major Stuart, the officer commanding the 86th, at once disembarked 8 officers and 150 men; and, taking 50 sailors belonging to the East India Company, with two guns, succeeded in disarming the mutineers. Leaving the sailors to garrison the place, assisted by 50 men of the 2nd Bombay European Regiment, he re-embarked on 13th August and steamed on to Goa. The 86th had been stationed in this place from 1806 to 1809 and no British regiment had been there since that time.

On the 15th the force transhipped into small boats and proceeded up river some 18 miles where they stopped in a monastery for a couple of days' rest. They certainly needed it as they had been so closely packed in the steamer that there had not been room for anyone to lie down. They then re-embarked in their little boats once more and again proceeded up river to Assinwood where they disembarked and marched the further 81 miles to Belgaum. This march

was accomplished in four days despite the appalling conditions.

The so-called road was a quagmire over which no wheeled transport could move at all. All the baggage had to be carried by pack animals or by coolies. The kits and bedding of both officers and men were completely destroyed by the continuous rain. It is interesting therefore to note from the Regimental History of the Royal Irish Rifles that, "Great attention was paid to the men's comfort, and their daily ration was increased for the march by an extra pound of beef and four drams of arrack (native spirit) per man, with the most satisfactory results!"

They were certainly very tough in those days. In modern times even one dram of this noxious and potent intoxicant would have sent most people reeling. But it must be remembered that they were without any of the physical and medical comforts which the modern soldier would consider essential.

Three Native regiments garrisoned the district; but the only one with which the 86th had any dealings was the wing of the 27th Bombay Infantry at Belgaum. The latter had already been disarmed at the same time as their other wing at Ratnagiri and, on the 24th August, the ring-leader of the mutiny was blown from the muzzle of a gun in the presence of a full parade of the garrison. Major Stuart wrote the following account of this gruesome proceeding for the Regimental history.

"As I had only about one hundred men, I did not wait for orders, but before going on parade I quietly ordered them to load. As there were only detachments of the 2nd Europeans and artillery beside my own men, I was determined not to be caught napping in case any disturbance should take place at the execution.

"It was indeed a fearful sight. The square was formed on three sides, the fourth being occupied by the Artillery with a field piece which was about to blow the poor wretch to

eternity. I was directed to send an officer and twenty men with the gun to parade close behind it. I must confess that I felt a shiver of horror when I beheld the doomed man approach. He was a splendid looking fellow, the perfect cut of a Hindoo high-caste soldier. He stepped as firmly and resolutely as if on parade, not a shake or shiver of his limbs; not a trace of emotion on his countenance, denoting the slightest fear of the frightful fate he was about to encounter. He did not appear to be more than twenty-five years of age. He placed himself composedly before the gun to which he was then fastened. Although perfectly aware that every moment he might expect the word 'Fire', that would blow him into a thousand pieces, his face never altered, but a slight sneer might be traced on his upper lip. It was a moment of horror to all, and when the word 'Fire' was given it was almost a relief. We heard a dull 'thud', a Scotch word more expressive than any English one I could give, and after a second or two the remains of the Hindoo soldier were falling to the ground like large hail stones, and particles of bone and muscle struck my officer and men who were stationed behind the gun. There was a dead silence for a moment, and the word from General Lyster came and what a relief it was, 'March home your regiments'."

The 28th Bombay Infantry from the same district were daily expected to mutiny and they were hurriedly despatched to Aden.

The 86th had many more adventures before the 1st Brigade, under Brigadier C. S. Stuart, joined Sir Hugh Rose's Force at the beginning of 1858. At the end of 1857 the regiment was distributed as follows: Three Companies in Mhow under Major Keane; Two Companies in Surat under Captain Jerome; Three Companies in Belgaum under Major Stuart; Two Companies in Poona under Captain Darby. Throughout the Indian Mutiny campaign British units had frequently to be split up and yet they managed to operate

effectively in a way which would be thought almost unbelievable to-day. In fact, if any unit was so split up for operations questions would be asked in the House of Commons.

During 1857 the regiment had lost 51 men from death and also 7 women and 28 children. 86 men had been invalided home to England; 10 had been sent home on the expiration of their term of service; and 3 had been transferred to other units. The total strength of the regiment at the beginning of 1858 was 31 officers and 1,009 other ranks, whilst the large number of 13 officers were shown "on leave". But these included the Colonel, who was being retired, and all those sent home by the Invaliding Board.

This brief account of the 86th at this time is not without interest to the reader. Conditions were infinitely tougher than they are to-day; and the raw material, the men, less well-educated. Their arms of course were much simpler and their transport problems easy compared to the complicated logistics with which the modern soldier has to deal. But they had great flexibility in many ways; and as no one could go any faster, the fact that they had to foot-slog practically everywhere in India was no particular handicap. The great problem was the question of re-inforcements. As we have seen it took months to get British troops out from England. Small garrisons in India therefore had to depend on themselves, knowing that even if help was available anywhere in the country it would probably be weeks before it arrived. The British soldier of those days had to be very self-reliant too, and their courage and steadfastness in conditions of appalling discomfort should make us feel a little humble.

The second brigade of Sir Hugh Rose's Force consisted of:
2nd Brigade—commanded by Brigadier C. Steuart (14th Light Dragoons)

14th Light Dragoons (less one squadron)

3rd Bombay Cavalry (less one troop)

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1 Cavalry Regiment—Hyderabad Contingent
3rd Bombay European Regiment (later The Leinster Regt.)
24th Bombay Infantry (later The 10th Baluch Regt.)
1 Infantry Regiment—Hyderabad Contingent
1 Battery Horse Artillery
1 Light Field Battery
1 Battery, Bhopal Artillery
1 Company Madras Sappers and Miners
Detachment Bombay Sappers
Siege Train
Detachment Hyderabad Contingent Field Force

The 14th Dragoons (afterwards the 14th (King's) Hussars formed in 1715, had spent many years of their early service in Ireland and had been immortalised in the poem "Charles O'Malley and the Irish Dragoons". The Regimental History¹ claims that the Regiment "bears on its banners twelve marks of distinction, beginning with DOURO (Peninsular War), and ending with CENTRAL INDIA, where it fought gloriously and fully sustained its former high reputation." In 1830 the Regiment was authorised to bear the title The 14th (King's) Light Dragoons.

In 1841, on 3rd January, the regiment was placed under orders for India to relieve the 4th Light Dragoons in Bombay. The Establishment was augmented to:

9 troops—consisting of:

55 Sergeants

40 Corporals

12 Trumpeters

8 Farriers

627 Privates

701 Horses

On April 20th of that year the regiment was dismounted and its horses were drafted to other cavalry regiments. It embarked in two echelons. The first left Gravesend on 24th

¹ Historical Record of the 14th (King's) Hussars from 1715 to 1900 by Colonel Henry Blackburne Hamilton.

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May in the freight steamship *Repulse* of the East India Company, and arrived in Bombay on 7th September—a voyage of 3½ months. The second echelon embarked at Gravesend on 14th June in the East India Company Ship *Reliance*, and arrived in Bombay on 5th October—a voyage of nearly 4 months.

It is interesting to note that these two units, the 86th Regiment and the 14th Dragoons, which were destined to serve together in the Central India Field Force, should have come out to India within a year of one another, though the voyage of the 86th was considerably quicker than that of the 14th.

From 1841 to 1857, a period of 16 years, the 14th Dragoons served in different parts of India and took part in the very tough Sikh Wars of 1848 and 1849. The Sikhs were one of the finest warrior classes of India, and they proved the hardest nut which the British had to crack in their conquest of India. Ten years later they also proved themselves the most loyal to the British Government in the critical days of the Mutiny.

In November 1848, in their first engagement, the 14th took part in the battle of Ramnugger, which was fought on the banks of the Chenab River in the Punjab. This was very much a cavalry affair. The 14th, numbering 442 sabres, made three brilliant charges against greatly superior numbers of Sikh cavalry. On this occasion the 14th had 6 officers and 38 men killed and wounded and lost 56 horses. Their very gallant commanding officer, Colonel Havelock, who led them personally in this engagement was missing and his headless body was found, hacked to pieces, twelve days afterwards.

The 14th also took part in the historic battle of Chillianwallah on 13th January, 1849, which is one of their regimental battle honours. In this bitterly fought affair the British gained a somewhat indecisive victory.

On the 20th February, 1857, the 14th, under the command

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of Lieut.-Colonel Charles Steuart (who afterwards commanded the 2nd Brigade of the Central India Field Force and eventually became General Sir Charles Steuart, G.C.B.), left Kirkee to take part in the Persian Campaign; but they were back in Kirkee again three months later.

Ever since their arrival in India in 1841 the 14th had worn the 'pagri (turban) round their forage caps, except in full dress, when shakos were worn. Now, in 1857, the authorities gave permission for the shako to be given up and the pagri worn all the time, in the same way as did the other Indian cavalry regiments. At the same time, for Field Service, their gloves and stocks were discarded: one can't help wondering how they had endured these unsuitable clothes for so long in an Indian climate. A little earlier, 1841, another interesting change had taken place; moustaches became general for all cavalry. Previously, since 1812, Hussars wore moustaches and Dragoons and Heavies shaved the upper lip.

The Right wing of the regiment was commanded by Major Scudamore and the Left by Major Gall, of whom we shall hear much more later. Colonel Henry Marion Durand, R.E., officiating Agent to the Governor-General for Central India, said in a letter to Lord Canning, referring to the operations in November 1857: "Much of the success in quelling this (Malwa) insurrection is due to the judicious daring and gallantry with which, whenever opportunity offered, Major R. H. Gall (afterwards Major-General Gall, C.B.), his officers and men, sought close conflict with the enemy—a bold one who often fought most desperately. I feel it a duty to Major Gall and Her Majesty's 14th Light Dragoons, men and officers, thus especially to beg your Lordship's influence in favour of officers and men who have merited, by conspicuous valour, everything that Her Majesty's Government may be pleased to confer. They deserve most highly."

The Nizam of Hyderabad had a large Native Army, con-

sisting not only of cavalry but of artillery and infantry also, officered by the British. In 1853 the Hyderabad Contingent, as it was called, was re-organised under the orders of the Governor-General in Council. It was to consist of four field batteries of artillery, 2,000 cavalry and 5,000 infantry.

When the Mutiny started there were particular grounds for fearing that it would spread, not only to the Native State of Hyderabad, but also to the Hyderabad Contingent, which was largely recruited from the races of Oudh and was in consequence particularly liable to infection. Moreover the emissaries of Tantia Topi were haunting the city of Hyderabad and urging the people to join him in rising and exterminating the British.

Fortunately, in Major Cuthbert Davidson, Resident of Hyderabad, the British Government had an Agent whose influence was great in the Nizam's Councils, whilst the loyalty of the Nizam and his famous Minister, Salar Jung, assisted in the preservation of peace in Southern India. But, in spite of all the sedition which was rife throughout their country, and of every inducement and opportunity for them to rebel in their isolated cantonments, the Hyderabad Contingent, with the exception of a certain number of men of one regiment, not only remained loyal but responded without hesitation to the call to arms and rendered splendid service in the suppression of the rebellion in Central India.

It is interesting to note that the new platoon exercise—the tearing off of the end of the cartridge with their teeth—which was generally blamed for the start of the Mutiny and which had been introduced throughout the Native Army, was not brought into force in 1857 in the Hyderabad Contingent. Perhaps that was the reason why there was no widespread rebellion in the Contingent.

The incipient mutiny in the 1st Cavalry of the Contingent was dealt with by the great courage and good judgement of its commander, Captain H. D. Abbott. For a time it was touch and go as to whether the mutiny would spread

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through the Regiment or not and Duffadar Mir Fida Ali did actually shoot at Captain Abbott, but missed. Eventually 1 Ressaidar, 3 Jemadars, 9 Duffadars, 76 Troopers and 4 Trumpeters were disarmed and placed in confinement on 23rd June, 1857, and a certain number of others deserted.

On the morning of 24th June Mir Fida Ali was hanged in the presence of the troops, and others were punished, some being shot and some blown from guns. No further trouble was experienced in any of the Corps of the Hyderabad Contingent, whilst the 1st Cavalry was made up to strength by transfers from other regiments and retrieved its honour by giving good and faithful service against the mutineers in Central India. The units of the Hyderabad Contingent which served with distinction in the Central India Field Force were the 1st Cavalry, 4th Cavalry, 1st Company Artillery, 2nd Company Artillery, 3rd Infantry, and 5th Infantry. Later, Sir Hugh Rose paid a warm tribute to the Hyderabad Contingent "whose organisation in the three arms, light equipment, knowledge of the Indian language and country, combined with their high military qualities, enabled them to act as the wing of my operations."

The 3rd Regiment of Bombay Light Cavalry were raised at Sirur in 1820 by Major P. Delamotte. He had 15 British officers—3 captains, 6 lieutenants and 6 cornets. When the Mutiny started the regiment was at Bushire in Persia, where they had been engaged in the Persian campaign under command of General Sir James Outram. In these operations they had much distinguished themselves, Lieutenant and Adjutant Arthur Thomas Moore and Lieutenant John Grant Malcolmson gaining the Victoria Cross.

By the end of October 1857 the regiment had disembarked at Bombay and assembled at Poona. Here orders were received for the regiment to give over its horses to mount the 3rd Dragoon Guards, who had just arrived from England. Luckily for the Bombay Light Cavalry the Dragoons considered the former's horses too small for their own

heavier men and only mounted one of their squadrons from them. So the Headquarters of the Light Cavalry, with 12 British officers and 276 sabres, marched to join Sir Hugh Rose's Force, leaving their dismounted men to form a depot in Poona.

In 1911 the regiment was renamed the 33rd (Queen Victoria's Own) Light Cavalry; in 1921 they were amalgamated with the 34th (Prince Albert's Own) Poona Horse; and in 1927 they became known as The Poona Horse (17th Queen Victoria's Own Cavalry), and were thereafter always known as "The Poona Horse".

The 3rd Bombay Europeans, later The Prince of Wales' Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians), were descended from the 100th Prince Regent's County of Dublin Regiment of Foot, disbanded in Canada in 1818. But the real life of the Regiment—which later, as the 109th Foot, and later still, as the 2nd Leinster Regiment, was to give distinguished service all over the globe until its disbandment in 1922—began in India in 1853. The East India Company then decided to increase its European troops by a third infantry regiment in each Presidency. By Bombay General Orders of 1st December, 1853, the new regiment in that Presidency was to be entitled the 3rd European Regiment. The existing 1st Bombay Europeans (Fusiliers) and the 2nd Bombay Europeans (Light Infantry) each furnished as a nucleus 2 sergeants, 2 corporals, 1 sergeant to promotion to colour-sergeant, 10 corporals for promotion to sergeant, 10 lance-corporals or privates for promotion to corporal, 2 drummers or buglers and 50 privates. The first officers were the Commandant, Lieut.-Colonel H. Cracklow, promoted from the line; Lieut.-Colonel J. E. Hume, promoted from the 14th Native Infantry; and Lieut.-Colonel G. le G. Jacob, promoted from the 2nd Grenadiers Native Infantry. The 3rd Bombay Europeans joined the Central India Field Force on 1st October, 1857.

The Madras Column, commanded by Brigadier-General Whitlock, consisted of one European and two Native

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Cavalry Regiments; five batteries artillery; two regiments European infantry; $3\frac{1}{2}$ regiments Native infantry, and a detachment of Engineers.

Sir Hugh Rose had to synchronise his movements with those of General Whitlock, who had not yet reached Jubbulpore. The country round Mhow and Indore, where Sir Hugh Rose had made his headquarters, was particularly suited for a period of rest and recuperation for the troops, who had already had some very tough campaigning. There was no lack of good water or fodder and at this time of year the climate was very pleasant indeed. On Christmas Day almost every officer of Sir Hugh's Central India Field Force dined together at Mhow. The dining room was gaily decorated with festoons and banners captured by the troops in their victorious little campaign in Malwa. Sir Hugh and his staff came over to dinner from Indore, about 12 miles away, and it was a very gay and enjoyable affair.

But the troops soon found that Sir Hugh had an iron hand in his velvet glove and he made full use of the few weeks' respite to see that all parts of his Force were fully prepared for the task ahead.

With the coming of the New Year information was received at Indore that the garrison of Saugor was closely besieged and, despite the fact that Whitlock's force was not yet concentrated at Jubbulpore, Sir Hugh decided to get going at once. Accordingly, on the 6th January, he set out with Sir Robert Hamilton, who was to accompany the Force as Political Officer, for Sehore—2 days march away. This place was occupied by the 2nd Brigade on 8th January. The 1st Brigade co-operated by marching against Chanderi in Sindhia's dominions.

At Sehore the mutineers of the former Bhopal Contingent were tried and sentenced to be executed by Court Martial, and 149 were in fact arrested, 274 dismissed and 228 re-entertained. The very unpleasant duty of carrying out the execution fell to the 3rd Europeans. A long trench was dug

THE REBELLIOUS RANI

and at evening, just as the sun was setting, the 149 prisoners were brought out and lined up facing the firing party of 150 of the 3rd Europeans. One mutineer escaped. Few regiments could have had a grimmer initiation to the Mutiny than this British Regiment.

Some loyal Sikhs of the Bhopal Contingent were placed under command of Captain H. O. Mayne and formed the nucleus of the 1st Regiment, the Central India Force.

CHAPTER FOUR

Sir Hugh Rose starts His Campaign

ON 16TH JANUARY Sir Hugh Rose left Sehore with the 2nd Brigade, with the object of attacking the fort of Rathgarh in the Saugor district. Rathgarh formed the key to the western frontier of Saugor and Bundelkhand, the former of which was partially, and the latter completely, in the hands of the rebels.

On leaving Sehore the 2nd Brigade passed over a wide plateau and, after ascending a range of hills, saw below them the beautiful city of Bhopal. The Begum, an astute and shrewd old lady, furnished Sir Hugh with supplies and placed at his disposal some 600 of her own troops. Bhopal looked prosperous and well administered and altogether a model principality. On leaving Bhopal however the country became very difficult and the transporting of the heavy guns and the siege train was a formidable undertaking.

After an arduous week's march across rivers, through jungle and over hills, the column arrived before the formidable fortress of Rathgarh on 24th January.

The fort of Rathgarh, situated 100 miles from Sehore¹ and 25 miles south-east of Saugor, was reputed to be of great strength, and, in 1810, the Maharaja of Sindhia, with a force four times the size of Sir Hugh's, had only taken it after a siege of 7 months. It commanded all the surround-

¹ See map on page 62 for ensuing campaign.

ing country and the road from Bhopal and western India to Saugor. It was situated at one end of a long, high hill in the midst of an area of country broken with hills, mullahs and dense patches of jungle. The eastern and southern faces of the fort rose sheer above the deep and rapid Bina River; the western face overlooked the town and the road by which the troops had to approach. The only means of access to the fort was by a steep and narrow road. The north face was covered by a strong wall and a ditch 20 feet wide. It was indeed a formidable stronghold.

The fort was garrisoned by Walayatis (Afghan mercenaries) and Pathans, under command of Nawab Muhammed Khan, a man of energy and resource. He was a relative of the Regent of Bhopal, who had become a chief leader of the rebels. Unless Rathgarh could be taken Saugor could not be relieved and the rebellion would have spread in every direction and the Raja of Banpur, a dangerous enemy of the Government, would have been in a position to intercept communications with the west and cut off the British force from its base.

The British Government had many loyal friends in Saugor and Bundelkhand, but the Raja of Banpur, Muhammed Fazal Khan and others, had crushed them by a campaign of intimidation and cruelty. Any person suspected of loyalty to the Government had their noses and hands cut off. In these circumstances it was astounding that so many Indians remained loyal to the British.

As he approached Rathgarh Sir Hugh heard that there were forces of rebels at Udepur in Sindhia's country, and also to his front. In order to protect his siege train, which was a day's march behind, he brought it forward by means of a night march.

Before proceeding further Sir Hugh carried out a thorough reconnaissance of the enemy's position. As already described Sir Hugh had very few maps, or plans of these fortresses; and the reconnaissances he had to carry out before

every one was a vital part of each battle. The rebels could be seen in the town and lining the banks of the stream. After a brief skirmish their advanced troops were driven in and the town and the fort were invested. By the evening of the 26th the Sappers had cut a road up the hill to a point opposite the northern face of the fort and the rebels had been expelled from the town.

The task of dragging the guns up the hill and into position fell to the 3rd Europeans and the Sappers. To add to their difficulties the jungle grass caught fire, and what with that and the heat of the sun, they were very nearly roasted. The steepness of the slope, together with a galling fire from the defenders, was too much for the elephants, and all the guns, ammunition and heavy equipment had to be man-handled. But at 3 a.m. on 27th January the breaching battery opened fire at a range of about 300 yards.

On the morning of the 28th, whilst the guns were pounding the walls, a large force of rebels, suddenly emerging from the jungle, with standards flying and drums beating, crossed the River Bina and attacked the vedettes watching the right rear of the camp. These were the troops and followers of the Raja of Banpur coming to relieve the beleaguered garrison. Without pausing for a moment in the work of the siege Sir Hugh detached part of his force to deal with this new threat. This detachment consisted of part of the 14th Light Dragoons, the 3rd Bombay Cavalry, the Horse Artillery and the 5th Hyderabad Infantry. But the artillery, firing with shell and grape shot were so effective that the rebels threw down their muskets and flags and fled before the cavalry and infantry could get at them.

This action, and the steady pounding of the guns, which had made an effective breach by 10 p.m., had so demoralised the defenders of the fort that they evacuated it during the night by letting themselves down from the walls by ropes. Despite their avowed determination that they would hold Rathgarh to the last they had been unable to stand the

shelling or meet the approaching assault. This was a stroke of luck for Sir Hugh as the fort was found to be enormously strong and could have been held for some time by even a small body of resolute defenders.

During the next day many of the fugitives were killed or captured. Amongst them were Muhammed Fazal Khan of the Delhi Royal Family, who was hanged over the gate of the fort. Fazal Khan was captured in hiding by a native servant in the employment of Captain Need of the 14th Dragoons. This fortunate servant received the handsome reward which had been set on Fazal Khan's head by the Government.

The charger of Lieut. Redmayne, 14th Light Dragoons, who had been killed at Mundesur on 23rd November, 1857, was recovered when the fort was captured. The Maharaja of Mundesur had taken possession of the horse when Lieut. Redmayne fell and had brought it to Rathgarh and then abandoned it in his flight. The animal had received a severe shell wound over the eye but was nevertheless purchased by Sir Hugh Rose.

The standards taken at Rathgarh, as at Mundesur, were marked with a crescent and a bloody hand. Amongst the fugitives who were killed were several Chieftains and about 70 rebels. Before leaving Rathgarh the fortifications and defences were destroyed by the Engineers in case the fort should fall again into rebel hands.

Sir Hugh marched from Rathgarh on 31st January, leaving Brigadier Steuart, with some troops, to protect the fort and the camp. He moved forward in the order of march which he always adopted when anywhere near the rebels, as a precaution against surprise.

As the column approached Barodia and the River Bina, which had to be crossed by a ford, they had very thick, long grass and ravines on their left; and it was here that the rebels had laid an ambush. Although the rebels fought desperately to prevent Sir Hugh from crossing the river they

SIR HUGH ROSE STARTS HIS CAMPAIGN

were eventually routed and fled, leaving baggage unpacked and other signs of a sudden retreat.

It was dark by the time this victory was achieved, and as Sir Hugh was not certain that the small force he had left at Rathgarh would be safe from the fleeing rebels, he only halted for a short time to rest his troops and then returned to Rathgarh the same night, the troops having been on the go for 15 hours non-stop.

The rebel losses amounted to between 400-500 and included Anant Singh, their ablest military leader, killed and the Raja of Banpur wounded. The British had 2 killed and 21 wounded, 2 of whom died later.

The result of this victory exceeded all expectations. Not only were communications with the west and Saugor opened, but the rebels in their panic abandoned 3 strong positions at Kurahi, Krulassa and Nariaoli.

The fall of Rathgarh had also had important results. The country south of Saugor was cleared of rebels and the road to Indore re-opened. There was now nothing to prevent Sir Hugh from marching to the relief of Saugor, which had been beleaguered for very nearly eight months. On the morning of the 3rd February he came in sight of the Saugor fort. The villagers, who had been robbed and persecuted by the rebels, assembled in thousands to greet him. The rebels dispersed and Sir Hugh entered the town, escorted by the Europeans, officers and others, who had been the mainstay of defence, together with the 31st Native Infantry, which had been one of the few regiments of the Bengal Army to remain loyal to the British.

Thanks largely to the loyalty of the 31st the cantonment of Saugor was intact. The 63 British women and 130 children had been evacuated to the fort, and they thronged the battlements as the relieving troops arrived, waving their handkerchiefs in a frenzy of joy. They had indeed had a harrowing time.

The column remained at Saugor for several days. The

Saugor district however was still menaced by a large force of rebels and mutineers who had occupied several surrounding forts, including Sanoda and Garhakota to the east. The relief of Saugor had opened up the roads to the west and north: now the 2nd Brigade had to open communications from Saugor to the east and cut the rebel line from Jhansi to the Nerbada River. The best means of so doing was to capture Garhakota.

On 8th February Captain Hare, with a detachment of all arms of the Hyderabad Contingent, was sent to take the little fort of Sanoda, where the rebels had stored their supplies; and also to prepare the ford over the Bina River for the siege artillery to cross.

Next day, knowing the effect which rapid movements had on the rebels, Sir Hugh marched 10 miles to Sanoda, and on the 11th made a double march of 21 miles to Bassari, from whence it was not far to Garhakota. Information was then received that the mutineers of the 51st and 52nd Native Infantry and other rebels at Garhakota were apparently unaware of the approach of Sir Hugh's Column, but that a post was occupied on a spur near the fort. Sir Hugh immediately pushed forward a party of cavalry which took the post and shot the occupants, except one who escaped.

The fort at Garhakota was a formidable place. The eastern face was washed by the wide river Sunar; the western and northern faces by the nullah Gidhari, with precipitous banks; the south side was flanked by bastions and a ditch 20 feet in depth by 30 feet wide. The interior wall of the fort was built of stone and was 29 feet high and about 20 feet thick. It was surrounded on almost all sides by dense forest. It was well equipped with munitions and provisions.

Sir Hugh, after his usual careful reconnaissance, attacked this stronghold with such determination on 12th February that the garrison lost heart and decided to escape during the

night. They were vigorously pursued however for 25 miles early next morning by a small mobile force, consisting of the Hyderabad cavalry, two troops of the 14th Dragoons and half a troop of horse artillery. This force was able to account for about a hundred of the fleeing rebels. The pursuing force came up with the rebels at the Bias River, a tributary of the Sunar. The two troops of the 14th—A and K troops—were commanded by Captains Need and Brown, with Lieuts. Leith and Dew. Captain Need killed 5 of the rebels with his own hand and was highly commended by Sir Hugh to the Commander-in-Chief.

After the capture of Garhakota Sir Hugh's force marched back to Saugor to prepare for a further advance. Information was then received that the rebels had gone to Maraora, one of the strongest forts in Bundelkhand; and the Rajas of Shahgarh and Banpur had met there to plan their future operations.

In his report to the Government of India Sir Robert Hamilton said of Garhakota that this was the strongest fort he had seen in Bundelkhand and as formidable as any he had come across in the whole of India. They had indeed been extremely lucky to capture it without either loss of life or of time. He said that the fall of this celebrated fort would have a great moral effect throughout the country.

The fort was found to be full of supplies. Sir Hugh had its western face destroyed and then returned to Saugor on 17th February. He was now anxious to push on as early as possible to Jhansi, 125 miles to the north, to avenge the massacre of the previous year and to crush this most important centre of rebel resistance under its celebrated leader, the Rani. But several considerations caused him to delay. First of all he had to effect a junction with his 1st Brigade, under Brigadier Stuart. And he could scarcely move from Saugor until he had definite news that General Whitlock's column was on the way there from Jubbulpore. He had also certain vital matters of administration to deal with.

Writing to Lord Elphinstone from Saugor at this time, Sir Hugh said: "I am unfortunately detained here by want of supplies and carriage, to the great disadvantage of the public service. I have lost nine precious days, doubly precious not only on account of lost time at a season when every hot day endangers the health and lives of the European soldiers, but because every day has allowed the rebels to recover the morale they had lost by my operations, which I had made as rapidly and efficiently as possible, knowing that any success with Orientals produces twice as good a result if one acts promptly and follows up one success with another. . . . Nothing requires system so much as transport. Laying in supplies, as it is called, is perfectly easy in a fertile and peaceful country, but this will not do in our case, where a country has been devastated or is in the hands of the enemy. Then appears all the risk of a civil or occasional system of supply. Why don't you put yourself at the head of the great question of Indian military transport? You would do your country more good than all your generals put together."

Bundelkhand was a rugged country full of passes through rocky hills, thick jungle, deep nullahs and winding streams. The country was therefore well suited to the guerilla tactics of the enemy and particularly difficult for the British force, which was comparatively weak in infantry and strong in artillery, the arm which was so essential for the subjugation of those strongly-built forts which formed the ideal centres of resistance for the rebels. It had been discovered that the districts through which the advance would now have to take place had been stripped of supplies by the enemy. Also the hot season was setting in, which would make grazing scarce for the animals.

Sir Hugh put the delay to good purpose. He collected sheep, goats, oxen, grain, flour and large supplies of tea and soda water. Much of the grain was supplied to him by the loyal Begum of Bhopal. His sick and wounded were trans-

ferred to the Saugor Field hospital, to be sent back or to rejoin the force as opportunity offered. He re-equipped his siege train with ammunition and strengthened it by the addition of heavy guns, howitzers and mortars from the Saugor arsenal. He also obtained an additional supply of elephants and some lighter summer clothing for his troops against the fierce heat they would soon have to endure. Up to this time the British had been wearing thick red and blue uniforms which were absolute murder in a tropical climate. The new dress, consisting of loose cotton trousers and blouses, had other advantages in that it rendered the troops far less visible to the enemy.

The various officers' messes of the British regiments laid in stocks of beer, soda water and wine, thus enabling the Parsee shopkeepers of Saugor to do a very good trade. The Regimental History of the Leinster Regiment (3rd Europeans) says this:

"The brief period of rest at Saugor came as a welcome interlude on the eve of a long and trying march north and everyone determined to make the most of it. The band played every evening. A few parties were got up. There was a picnic to the beautiful lake near the fort; there was actually a 'ball'—at which five ladies were present; but of these, alas, only two could waltz! . . . Soon, however, and all well knew it, these scenes would give place to roughing it, the night bivouac in the jungle, the hurried cup of tea and hard biscuit before the midnight march, and hard fighting in the scorching weather and wasted country."

But essential as the delay was, it went far to neutralise the effect of the speedy capture of Garhakota. The rebels regained their morale and again occupied in force strong positions in the Shahgarh and adjoining districts, such as the forts of Surahi and Maraora, and the difficult passes in the mountainous ridges which separated the Shahgarh and Saugor districts. In view of all the circumstances therefore, and the fact that he would be encumbered by transport

carrying 15 days supplies, Sir Hugh decided to advance upon Jhansi through the more open country skirting the dangerous part of Bundelkhand.

But first he had to negotiate one of the difficult passes into Shahgarh. So he ordered Major Orr, who 'was commanding the Advanced Guard of the 1st Brigade, with some Hyderabad Cavalry, to reconnoitre the passes.

At length news was received that Whitlock had left Jubbulpore and that the 1st Brigade would arrive at Goona on 28th February. At 2 a.m. on the 27th therefore Sir Hugh set out with the remainder of his troops of the 2nd Brigade. He ordered Brigadier Stuart, commanding the 1st Brigade, to move westwards from Goona to take Chanderī, whilst he forced his way northwards to cross the Betwa River. He then planned to march with both brigades against Jhansi.

As soon as the 2nd Brigade left camp rockets and fires signalled their departure to the enemy in the surrounding hills. Sir Hugh's force reached Rejwas on the 1st March, where he was joined by Major Orr, with information about the passes. The same afternoon Sir Hugh captured the little fort of Barodia, the village being taken at the point of the bayonet by the 3rd Europeans, who killed 50 of the enemy and took 52 prisoners. A small garrison was left in the fort to maintain the line of communication with Saugor.

There were three passes into Shahgarh; they were Narhat, near Malthone, Madanpur and Dhamoni. Sir Hugh was informed that the Raja of Banpur, believing that the British must advance through the difficult, but more direct, pass of Narhat, had occupied it with some 10,000 men and barricaded it with boulders of rock. There was however an easier route through the Madanpur pass, which was defended by a rebel force under the Raja of Shahgarh. Sir Hugh determined to make his real attack on this pass whilst sending a detachment to make a feint against Narhat. With this end in view he detailed a force under Major Scudamore to menace Narhat whilst, with the remainder,

now strengthened by the junction with the Hyderabad cavalry under Major Orr, he moved on Madanpur on the 3rd March.

The engagement which then ensued was considered by Sir Hugh to be one of the most difficult and critical of the whole campaign so far. The march proceeded without obstacle to Lunia, a mile in advance of which the pass commenced. As the column approached the pass skirmishers, concealed in the jungle and hill sides, opened fire, but were driven back.

On clearing the village of Lunia the rebels were seen in large numbers on the hills. Major Orr's guns opened on them, with round shot and spherical cases, and the enemy replied with heavy matchlocks and musket fire. Some 100 sepoys, concealed in a glen where the artillery fire could not deal with them, caused some casualties and forced the guns to retire out of range. Sir Hugh's horse was shot under him. But the infantry of the Hyderabad Contingent, under Captain Sinclair, charged the glen at the double and drove the enemy out. At the same time the 3rd Europeans made a frontal attack, whilst a troop of the 14th Dragoons was sent to threaten their rear.

Not giving the enemy time to breathe Sir Hugh directed the 3rd Europeans to storm the pass, supported by the guns of the Hyderabad Contingent. It was of this operation that Sir Hugh said, (writing to Sir Colin Campbell on 9th March): "The great thing with these Indians is not to stay too long firing; but after they have been cannonaded, to close with them. They cannot stand. By forcing the pass of Mudempore I have taken the whole line of the enemy's defence in rear; and an extraordinary panic seized them."

The pass having been gained, Sir Hugh sent directions to Brigadier Steuart, who had halted in the rear with the reserve and siege train, to advance through it and occupy the head of the lake in the village. As soon as they arrived fire was opened on the rebels' guns with 8-inch howitzers and 9-pounders.

The cavalry sent in pursuit of the fleeing rebels followed them to the walls of the fort of Surahi. The rebels' total losses were estimated at 300.

The effect of this victory was tremendous. The rebels had never believed that these passes could be forced and they now evacuated, without any resistance, the formidable pass of Narhat and the forts of Surahi and Maraora, the fortified castle of Banpur and the almost impregnable fortress of Talbahat on the road to Jhansi. They abandoned also the line of the Bina and the Betwa rivers with the exception of the fortress of Chanderi on the left of the latter river.

Meanwhile the 1st Brigade, under command of Brigadier C. S. Stuart, had left Mhow and marched on Goona, meeting little opposition. Their next objective was Chanderi, where it was reported that a strong force of rebels had assembled. Chanderi had been a great city in the time of Akbar and its strong fort was manned by the rebels in considerable numbers. Sited on the top of a high hill, and defended by ramparts of sandstone, flanked with circular towers, the fort of Chanderi appeared formidable indeed. To this place had flocked the sepoys defeated by Sir Hugh in the actions which had already taken place.

On the 5th March Brigadier Stuart reached Khukwasas, en route to Chanderi. The road between these two places ran through thick jungle. Next day the brigade moved forward, covered by a strong advanced guard consisting of the 86th Foot and the 25th Bombay Native Infantry.

After marching 3 miles they arrived at a narrow gorge between two high hills where resistance was expected; but it was not until they had advanced another 10 miles that they came upon road barricades. These were removed by the Engineers and the rebels were dislodged from the hills on either side of the road. When the brigade emerged from the gorge large numbers of rebels were seen in a ruined temple and some houses. The artillery opened on them with round shot and shell and the mutineers were

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driven back to a strong walled enclosure which was loop-holed and furnished with thick bastions. The artillery could make no impression on it but the troops rushed forward, led by Lieut. Lewis of the 86th and Captain Keatinge (afterwards General Keatinge, V.C.). They rushed the wall, jumped into the enclosure and drove the enemy out.

A hundred of the enemy were found dead here, besides those who had fallen over the walls or were killed in the pursuit. The 86th had 7 men killed when a magazine exploded, and had 3 other men killed and 2 officers and 19 men wounded.

Stuart pursued his advantage and did not halt until he had occupied the hills to the west of Chanderi. He spent the next five days in clearing the neighbouring villages, in reconnaissance, and in getting his siege train and mortars into position on the ridge from whence they could breach the walls. The rebel guns however were active and could not be silenced. It was now necessary to make a road along the crest of the ridge, in order to get the heavy guns into position. Since the gunners were exposed to the enemy's rifle fire much of the work had to be done at night. On the 10th March the artillery and engineers, with the aid of elephants, dragged up the 24-pounders. That same night the rebels made a sally but were driven back eventually by the 25th Bombay Infantry.

On the 13th the breaching batteries opened fire at point blank range. The trees in the fort were covered in gorgeous blossom; flights of parrots screamed amongst them; monkeys kept up a continual chatter; wild ducks wheeled overhead, and occasionally a panther was seen. It seemed sad to destroy this idyllic scene. The breaching batteries, being nearest to the fort, were the object of the rebels particular attention, as were the men and the bullocks bringing up the ammunition. The rebels appeared to have a large number of guns extending completely round the walls and bastions of the fort. Our own shells fell thick and fast into the fort

but it was so large and there was so much cover that the defenders could obtain plenty of shelter.

On the 15th a detachment of the 1st Cavalry Hyderabad Contingent arrived, with despatches from Sir Hugh Rose. Next morning the remainder of the 86th Regiment marched into camp and the same day the breach was reported as practicable for the assault.

Two storming parties were detailed, one for the breach under command of Brigadier Stuart, and the other under Captain Little. The latter party was to make a secondary attack opposite the Kati Gati where the rock could be climbed. This was intended to draw off the enemy; but they were also to enter the fort if possible. The cavalry was left in charge of the camp, which was struck, as in that thick country cavalry could be of little use for the pursuit.

Under cover of darkness Captain Keatinge inspected the breach and found it suitable, but a deep trench had been cut in the rocks on the far side of it. Then, at 3 a.m. on the 17th March, the assaulting troops formed up and the attack on the fort began. The storming parties from the 86th and 25th Native Infantry rushed forward; but Captain Keatinge, who went with them, was struck down and severely wounded. Scaling ladders were thrown across the trench and the troops dashed into the fort, capturing the guns and shooting or bayoneting the defenders, many of whom made good their escape by hurling themselves over the walls.

A magazine exploded, killing 7 men of the 86th; but the fort was quickly cleared of the rebels and the palace and buildings beyond it. Most of the rebels fled through the town beneath and into the thick jungle beyond. A number were intercepted and cut up by a force of cavalry which had previously been sent to Talbahat for the purpose. The fort was dismantled, a large number of guns were taken and about 100 dead were found. On the British side one

SIR HUGH ROSE STARTS HIS CAMPAIGN

officer (Lieut. Moresby of the Royal Battery) and 2 men were killed, and 4 officers and 19 men were wounded. A garrison of Sindhia's men was left in the fort, and on the 19th March the 14th Dragoons marched to join the 2nd Brigade.

Sir Hugh Rose heard of the storming of Chanderi on the 18th. On the 19th he marched to Chachanpur, 14 miles from Jhansi, having already opened up communications with the 1st Brigade. On the afternoon of the 20th he sent on the cavalry and the horse artillery of his 2nd Brigade to reconnoitre and invest Jhansi.

Sir Hugh was about to follow with his infantry when an express messenger arrived bearing two despatches. One of these was from the Governor-General to Sir Robert Hamilton and the other, from the Commander-in-Chief, was to Sir Hugh. The purport of both these despatches was that the Raja of Charkari, a ruler who had shown unwavering loyalty to the British throughout the troublous period of the Mutiny, was being besieged in his fort by Tantia Topi and the Gwalior Contingent. The rebels had defeated the Raja's troops, taken the town of Charkari, burnt half of it, and were closely investing the fort. Sir Hugh was ordered at once to his relief, as Whitlock's force was not near enough to go. Charkari was about 80 miles away from where Sir Hugh's force was encamped, on the direct road to Banda.

It appeared to Sir Hugh Rose that the surest way to save the lesser and more distant place was to attack and capture the more important and nearer fortress of Jhansi. Indeed, it was probable that if the Commander-in-Chief could have been up-to-date with the situation he would have come to the same conclusion. Distances were so great and means of communications so slow however that this sort of situation often occurred, thus throwing a great responsibility on the subordinate commander.

But Sir Hugh was a soldier and had received a positive

order, which left nothing to his discretion. However, he had a very wise and understanding Political Agent in Sir Robert Hamilton, and the latter took upon himself the responsibility of proceeding with the investment of Jhansi, trusting that such a course of action would draw the enemy away from Charkari. He communicated his decision to the Governor-General accordingly.

Sir Hugh therefore set out at 2 a.m. on the morning of the 21st March for Jhansi. He arrived before the city at nine o'clock, halted his troops about a mile and a half from the fort and proceeded with his staff to make a reconnaissance. So thorough was Sir Hugh over this that he took nine hours—from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.—to complete it. How true was that old principle of war, "Time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted."

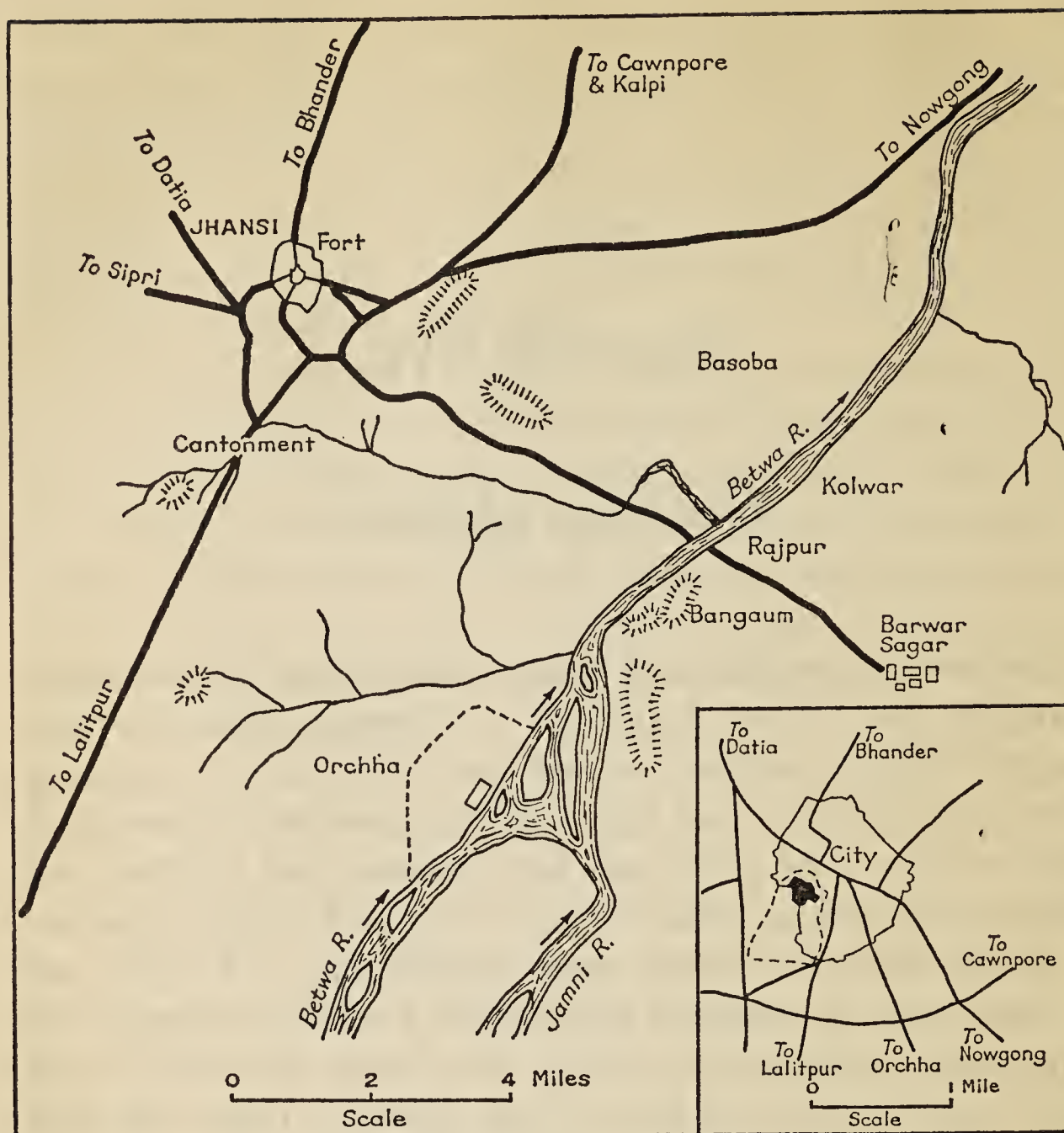
CHAPTER FIVE

The Siege of Jhansi

MEANWHILE THE Rani had been making every endeavour to prepare the fort of Jhansi for the coming siege. She had supervised the building of new gun sites, had the existing ones strengthened, and held training exercises. Hundreds of tons of rice and grain had been roasted and stocked and large quantities of food for the troops and civilians laid in. The bastions and turrets were manned day and night and a high state of readiness maintained. The Rani's energy and dynamic leadership had never been more in evidence and she was the life and soul of the defence. How this well brought-up Hindu lady could have learned so much of the fundamentals of war is one of the mysteries which shroud her personality. Like Joan of Arc she had a flair for military leadership and seemed to know instinctively the right course to pursue far better than most of the other more experienced rebel leaders.

The fortress of Jhansi was renowned as one of the strongest in India. It was built of massive granite masonry, with walls varying in thickness from 16 to 20 feet, which make it very difficult to breach. It had extensive and elaborate outworks of the same solid construction, with front and flanking embrasures for artillery fire and loop-holes, of which in some places there were 5 tiers for musketeering.

THE REBELLIOUS RANI



Jhansi and surrounding country

Guns sited on the high towers of the fort could command all the surrounding country. On one tower, called the "white turret", which had recently been raised in height by the rebels, the standard of the Rani waved in proud defiance. The fortress was surrounded on all sides by the city of Jhansi, except on the west and part of the south face.

The steepness of the rock protected the west side and the fortified city wall, with bastions springing from the centre of the south face, ended in a high mound or mamelon, from which flanking fire could be brought to bear to protect

THE SIEGE OF JHANSI

the south face. The mound was fortified by a strong circular bastion for 5 guns, round part of which ran a ditch of solid masonry, 12 feet deep and 15 feet broad.

The city of Jhansi was $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circumference and was surrounded by a massive fortified wall from 6 to 12 feet thick, varying in height from 18 to 30 feet, with numerous flanking bastions from which both artillery and infantry fire could be brought to bear. On the east side was a picturesque lake and Water Palace.

Between the open ground, on which Sir Hugh had halted, and the city and fortress, were the remains of the cantonments, the ruined bungalows in which the Europeans had lived, the jail, the Star Fort and the sepoy lines. Nearer the city wall were several large temples and gardens full of clumps of tamarind trees. One of these gardens, the Joka Bagh, was the scene of the massacre of the Europeans. On the right of the halting ground, stretching to the north and east of the city, was a long ridge of hills, through which ran the Kalpi and Urchali roads. To the west were more hills and the Datia road.

Large numbers of the rebels could be seen near the ruined bungalows. But after exchanging a few shots they retreated into the gardens near their defences and Sir Hugh and his staff proceeded with their reconnaissance.

By the 23rd March the whole place was completely invested by the cavalry. Seven flying camps of cavalry were established, with their chain of outposts and vedettes, and they were on duty round the city night and day. The men of the 14th Dragoons slept in front of their horses, which were always ready saddled and bridled. The standard of discipline of the men was amazingly high and their morale, after their victorious march through Bundelkhand, was terrific. Not a night passed without these cavalry vedettes capturing or killing escaping rebels.

But the morale of the defenders was also high. Earlier the Rani had had a meeting of the city representatives and

the leaders of the mutineers to ask them whether they wished to defend the city or not. Some of her Ministers advised her to sue for peace, but the majority, including of course the leaders of the sepoys, voted for war. They were backed by the Bundela¹ chiefs and the citizens' representatives; and popular enthusiasms for this decision to fight to the death for the freedom and independence of Jhansi was immense.

Nevertheless there is an interesting sidelight on this question of fighting to the death, before battle was truly joined, which is reported only by the Indian historians, Tahmankar and Godse. Godse says: "A rider came to the city gates and delivered a letter addressed to the Ranee. It was taken to her by the Prime Minister and soon the whole council was summoned to consider a reply. The letter said, that Lakshmibai should go and meet the captain (presumably Sir Hugh Rose) accompanied by her Prime Minister, Lakshmanrao, Lalu Bakshi, Moropant Tambe (the Rani's father) and five other ministers who were mentioned by name. No one else must accompany the Ranee, nor must she have an armed escort. She must meet the captain within two days and not later."

After discussing this with her Ministers a letter was written to the effect that the Rani herself, being a woman, could not go, but that the Prime Minister, accompanied by an armed escort could go. They could accept this or not as they liked.

No one has really confirmed this story; but in *The Memoirs of An Ancient House*² there is an interesting description of the activities of Lieut. H. H. Lyster (afterwards General Harry Hammon Lyster, C.B., V.C.) who was A.D.C. to Sir Hugh Rose at the time. It reads:

"In the spring of 1858 Sir Hugh Rose lay before the town of Jhansi, with the Rani of which the Government Agent, Sir Robert Hamilton, was in treaty to procure the surrender.

¹ Local levies.

² By the Rev. H. L. Lyster-Denny, M.A.

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Sir Hugh was much dissatisfied with the progress of these negotiations . . ." which would appear to bear out that some sort of negotiations were going on. But whatever they were there is apparently no mention of them in the despatches or in the British historical records of that time. In any case they came to nothing.

On 25th March the 1st Brigade arrived and was posted south of the fort to constitute what was called the Left attack. The Right attack was to be mounted by the 2nd Brigade from the east. The attack on Jhansi offered serious difficulties. The fort could only be breached from the south, but this side was flanked by the fortified city walls and mound. It was evident therefore that the first objective must be the capture of the mound. This could only be effected by placing breaching batteries on a rocky knoll to the south of the lake, opposite the Orchha gate. The batteries for this could not be completed until the 1st Brigade had joined up. The siege then commenced in earnest and, for 17 days, shot and shell were poured into the city and the enemy's guns never ceased to make reply. During this period most of the investing force never took off their clothes.

The chief of the rebel artillery was a first-rate gunner and the manner in which the rebels served their guns, repaired their defences and kept their batteries in action was remarkable. The Rani had mobilised the women of Jhansi, an even more revolutionary step in India than would appear at first sight; and they could be seen working in the batteries and carrying ammunition, repairing the walls and bringing food and water to the troops in action; while the Rani herself continuously visited and encouraged her troops. It is reported that one of the bombardiers commanding a breaching gun told Sir Hugh on one occasion that "he had covered the Queen and her ladies with his gun" and asked permission to fire on them. Sir Hugh however told him that he did not approve of that sort of warfare.

The strength of the garrison was estimated at 10,000

Bundelas (local levies) and Walayatis and 1,500 sepoy, of whom 400 were cavalry. The number of guns in the city and fort was estimated at 30 to 40. Everything indicated a prolonged and determined resistance and the Rani herself knew full well that the fall of Jhansi would be the beginning of the end for their cause in Central India—as well as death for herself.

On the rocky ridge the following batteries constituted the Left, and main attack: two 18-pounders to disarm the defences of the fort, two 10-inch mortars to destroy the fort, and two 8-inch mortars and one 8-inch howitzer to act on the mound and adjacent wall, and the city. The fire of the two 18-pounders was so effective that by the 29th the parapets of the mamelon bastion were nearly destroyed. The two 10-inch mortars created great havoc in the fort and a powder magazine blew up.

But a practicable breach was not made until the 30th. The rebels repaired the breach with a double row of palisades filled with earth, against which fire was directed with red hot shot. Riflemen to fire at the parapets, embrasures and loop-holes were posted in all the batteries; and piquets of riflemen were distributed in the temples and gardens and in the Joka Bagh. All these caused numerous casualties among the rebels in the city as well as on the parapets.

Two of the rebel defences which were difficult to silence were the Wheel Tower on the south and the Garden Battery on a rock in the rear of the west wall of the city. To deal with these a new battery, called the Kapu Tokri, or East Battery, was established with two 3½-inch mortars. As these did not prove sufficient two 8-inch mortars and a 9-pounder were substituted for them. Before the sand-bag battery could be made ready for the 9-pounder however, Acting Bombardier Brenna, a very young soldier, opened fire with the gun in the open and silenced an enemy gun in the bastion. Sir Hugh rewarded him with praise for his courage and immediate promotion. The two 8-inch mortars,

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and occasionally the two 10-inch mortars of the Left attack, answered the garden battery, causing considerable casualties to the rebels. It was afterwards discovered that the continuous shelling of the attacking batteries caused some 60 to 70 casualties a day among the defenders.

By the 30th March the defences of the city and fort had been considerable damaged; and the fire of the rebel guns had been lessened. But the courage of the defenders remained high. However, the constant British artillery attack had entailed a great consumption of ammunition. It was decided therefore to assault the place by escalade, at the same time making use of the breach upon which heavy and continuous fire was kept up day and night.

All arrangements had been made for the assault when, on the evening of March 31st, information reached Sir Hugh that a rebel army was advancing from the north under Tantia Topi, to whom the Rani had sent urgent messages for help. Having taken Charkhari with a small force of 900 sepoy and 4 guns. Tantia had plundered and burnt half the town and captured 24 guns and three lakhs of rupees. He was now marching to her assistance at the head of 22,000 men, including five or six regiments of the Gwalior Contingent and 28 guns. By March 30th he had arrived at Barwa Sagar, about three miles from the Betwa and about four miles south-east of Jhansi.

The position of Sir Hugh was a perilous one. Before him was a rebel fortress, still far from conquered, and behind him a greatly superior rebel force, eager for battle. Everything hung on his appreciation of the situation and the way in which he implemented his conclusions. He rightly considered that to withdraw the troops investing the fortress to meet the new threat would give the beleaguered garrison all the moral advantages of victory and also the material advantage that would result from the raising of the siege. He resolved therefore to continue to press the siege with vigour, whilst advancing with all his spare troops against

Tantia Topi. This was a daring plan indeed and history teems with examples of disasters which have occurred from such divisions of strength.

But Sir Hugh had confidence, both in his own powers of leadership and in the fighting qualities of his troops, which he felt would discount their inferiority in numbers. Just how daring this plan was can be estimated when one realises that Sir Hugh was only able to provide 1,500 men of all arms—of which a mere 500 were British—to compete with Tantia Topi's army of 22,000.

Tantia Topi, with good reason, was brimming with confidence for an overwhelming victory. The proceedings were witnessed with delight by the defenders of Jhansi who thought that the British were marching to certain destruction. They shouted all night in a frenzy of joy.

Sir Hugh drew his mobile force from both his brigades, the detachment from the 1st Brigade being led by Brigadier C. S. Stuart and that from the 2nd Brigade by himself in person. The detail of the troops at Sir Hugh's disposal was:

16th Light Field Guns
 14th Dragoons—243 rank and file
 Hyderabad Cavalry—207 rank and file
 86th Regiment—208 rank and file
 3rd Europeans—226 rank and file
 24th Regiment N.I.—298 rank and file
 Siege guns—3

This small force was all that stood between the Rani and safety. How her spirits must have risen at the thought of her deliverance. One can imagine the crushing anxiety with which she had seen the gradual breaching of the fortress walls and realised how narrow the margin which separated her from defeat. Although she had continued to show a brave face and indomitable determination to all around her, in the dark watches of the night it must have seemed a terrible burden. "I will never give up my Jhansi" she had said once. Now, perhaps, it would be true.

CHAPTER SIX

The Defeat of Tantia Topi at the Betwa

ON 31ST MARCH Sir Hugh had received information that Tantia Topi was planning to cross the River Betwa during the night. Sir Hugh therefore left the pack and heavy baggage with the 1st Brigade and marched at 9 p.m. from Jhansi to the village of Basoba, six miles away, which commanded the two fords of Rajpur and Kolwar, by which the enemy advancing from Barwa Sagar had to cross. At Basoba he received reports from the two outposts he had sent forward to watch the fords that the rebels seemed to be hesitating over the crossing. So Sir Hugh ostentatiously withdrew to camp, leaving only a few look-out posts. Thus encouraged, Tantia Topi crossed the river next day, preceded by an advanced guard of Walayatis; and after sunset took up a position in battle order opposite the camp of the 2nd Brigade.

At sunset the rebels lit a huge bonfire on some rising ground as a signal to the defenders of Jhansi, who answered by salvoes from all the batteries in the fort and city and with resounding shouts of joy and triumph. It was evident that Tantia Topi would attack in force the next morning.

Sir Hugh drew up his small force during the night, half a mile from camp and on either side of the road from the Betwa, in two lines. On the right flank of the first line he

placed a troop of the Hyderabad Cavalry, under Lieut. Clerk; a troop of the 14th Light Dragoons, under Captain Need, and the Eagle Troop of the Bombay Horse Artillery (4 guns), under command of Lieut.-Colonel Turnbull. In the centre he placed the detachments of the 24th Bombay Infantry and the 3rd Europeans, the three heavy guns, and the detachment of Hyderabad Contingent Infantry; and on the left flank Captain Lightfoot's battery and two troops of the 14th Dragoons. The second line was in contiguous columns at quarter distance; a weak troop of the 14th Dragoons on the right flank and some Hyderabad Cavalry on the left flank; in the centre were the 86th Regiment; Captain Woolcombe's battery of 6-pounders; Captain Ommaney's battery of 9-pounders, and a detachment of the 25th Bombay Infantry.

Sir Hugh threw out strong piquets and vedettes of the 14th Light Dragoons and Hyderabad Cavalry to watch his front and flanks. The British troops took up their positions silently in the dark with excellent discipline; and the opposing forces spent the night drawn up opposite one another in a state of instant readiness.

Just after midnight a sowar galloped in with the news that a large enemy force was crossing the Kolwar ford with the obvious object of turning the British left flank. Sir Hugh at once ordered Brigadier Stuart (Commander 1st Brigade) to take the second line of his force along the road to Bangaon, about eight miles from Jhansi, where he would be in a position to outflank this enemy flanking force.

Sir Hugh then formed a new second line by drawing back the detachment of the 24th Bombay Infantry from the first line. His plan was to make up for his weakness in numbers by seizing the initiative with a bold and determined attack in force at first light. But Tantia Topi forestalled him by advancing before day-break on a broad front, covered by a cloud of skirmishers. The British piquets and vedettes withdrew steadily, closing to each flank to uncover the guns.

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Both sides then opened a heavy artillery, musketry and matchlock fire along the whole front.

The enemy had taken up an excellent position on the reverse slope of some rising ground where it was difficult to bring effective fire to bear upon them. So Sir Hugh ordered the front line of his infantry to lie down in order that the Troop of Horse Artillery (the Eagle Troop) could wheel to the right and enfilade the enemy's left flank. Captain Lightfoot took his battery slightly forward to his left front, which made the fire of his guns more effective.

Seeing that the fire of these guns on either flank were causing casualties to the rebels Sir Hugh then directed Captain Prettijohn to charge the enemy's right with his troop of the 14th Dragoons, supported by Captain MacMahon of the same regiment. At the same time Sir Hugh himself led a charge against the enemy's left, with Captain Need's troop of the 14th Dragoons and a strong troop of the Hyderabad Cavalry. It was, to say the least of it, somewhat unusual for the Commanding General to lead a cavalry charge in person. But that was typical of Sir Hugh.

The enemy's best troops, sepoys and Walayatis, met the charge most bravely by withdrawing slightly to a new position based on two rocky knolls. This was the critical moment when the result of the engagement might have gone either way. It was the cavalry who decided the issue, as only cavalry, well and boldly handled, could do in such a situation. Before the enemy were able to consolidate themselves in their new positions the cavalry wheeled and took it in reverse. The enemy line broke and the break became a rout. Although groups of the enemy stood fast and fought it out to the last, Tantia Topi's front line was hurled back on the Betwa in confusion.

The whole of the artillery and cavalry moved forward in pursuit, the Horse Artillery following the road to the Betwa, from which it had enfiladed the rebel position, the Field Battery going across country. Occasionally groups of

the rebels rallied, taking the best advantage of the ground. One body wedged themselves into a nullah so that neither musketry nor artillery fire could destroy them. The further the enemy were pursued the thinner and fewer they became, until only little groups and odd fugitives dotted the plain. Six guns were abandoned in the flight.

The second line, under command of Tantia Topi himself, was drawn up some three miles in rear of the first. This force retired in good order, covered by skirmishers; but the British drove in the latter and scattered the main body, which then withdrew fighting towards the Rajpur ford, firing the jungle as they went. However, the cavalry galloped through the burning forest. Once on the road, cavalry and guns galloped without a check until they came within gunshot of the village of Rajpur, where the rebels made their last stand.

Covered by the fire of the Eagle Troop and the Field Battery, two troops of the 14th Dragoons and the Hyderabad Cavalry crossed the river by the ford, which was crowded with the enemy's artillery, ordnance park stores, guns and ammunition wagons. The British Infantry followed along behind at all speed. Quantities of the rebels' stores, guns and supplies of all sorts were captured.

In crossing the river Captain Need of the 14th Dragoons, who was a fine horseman and also a great swordsman, was surrounded and closely pressed by the rebels. He was rescued from this perilous situation, with his saddle and jacket slashed and his reins cut through, by Lieut. Leith of the same regiment, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallant action.

James Leith was the third son of General Sir Alexander Leith, K.C.B., of Freefield and Glenkendie, Aberdeenshire. He was gazetted to the 14th Light Dragoons as Cornet on 4th May, 1849. He had already seen a good deal of active service in the Mutiny at the siege and capture of Dhal, the action before Mundesor, where he was wounded; and

in the engagement at Gooravia and the relief of Neemuch. His citation read as follows: "For conspicuous bravery at Betwa, on 1st April, 1858, in having charged alone and rescued Captain Need, of the same regiment, when surrounded by a large number of rebel infantry." During the campaign Lieut. Leith was twice mentioned in despatches and was made a Brevet Major on 20th July, 1858. He retired from the Army in 1864 and died in London at the age of 42.

Meanwhile the 1st Brigade, under Brigadier Stuart, having found no enemy at Bangaon, had marched back to the sound of the battle, having sent their cavalry, and a troop of the 14th Dragoons, on ahead. They pursued and cut up some fugitives and then came upon a large body of the enemy, upwards of 2,000 in number, supported by some guns, who were preparing to oppose their progress around the village of Kushabir.

Brigadier Stuart advanced, with his infantry in skirmishing order, his cavalry on either flank and his guns on the main road, until they came within 600 yards of the rebel position. The artillery then opened fire and after a few rounds the infantry were ordered to storm the village. The 86th Regiment and the 25th Bombay Infantry at once dashed forward and carried the position at the point of the bayonet, capturing all six of the rebel guns. The British line advanced steadily, driving the rebels over some difficult ground until a second village was reached, on the outskirts of which the enemy made another stand. They were however instantly ejected by a charge of the 86th Regiment. The enemy then withdrew in good order, covered by a strong rearguard.

Two elephants and some camels were captured and about 250 of the rebels were killed by the 1st Brigade alone, which had by then been under arms for 36 hours. The British casualties in the Battle of the Betwa River numbered 15 killed and 66 wounded (4 mortally). Both horses and men

were completely exhausted and Sir Hugh Rose marched them back about nine miles to their camp at Jhansi.

The remnants of Tantia Topi's army now fled to Kalpi. From the rebel point of view Tantia Topi's defeat was the most devastating episode in the Mutiny. His men had fought bravely and, in defeat, had never asked for quarter. They had outnumbered their opponents by about 20 to 1; they were well-equipped and in good heart. And yet they suffered an ignominious defeat. But it was on a par with Sir Hugh's constant ability to out-wit, out-flank, out-fight and out-general the rebel leaders. Some have blamed Tantia Topi for his faulty tactics and lack of leadership; and it is true that he did not have the Rani's flair for the essentials of war. But he was a shrewd general nonetheless, as was shown by his attack on Charkhari, which very nearly drew off Sir Hugh's force from their main objective of Jhansi.

The result of this disaster to Tantia's relieving force was completely demoralising to the defenders of Jhansi. After days of anxiety their hopes had risen sky-high, only to be dashed to the ground. But although the garrison had poured a savage fire onto the investing troops throughout the engagement, they never made a sortie to help Tantia Topi. No one has ever satisfactorily explained why not.

Meanwhile Sir Hugh had good reason to be pleased. His gamble had come off. In his report on the action he brought "to the favourable notice of the Commander-in-Chief, the conduct of the force under his command, which, without relaxing in the very least the arduous siege and investment of a very strong and fortified city, garrisoned by 10,000 desperate men, fought with the few numbers left in camp, a grand action with a relieving army; beat and pursued them 9 miles, killing 1,500 of them and taking from them all their artillery, stores and ammunition."

A number of officers were mentioned in the despatch. Lieut. Fox, Madras Sappers and Miners, killed 8 men with his own hand; and Lieut. Hastings Frazer, who killed 3.

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The following were also mentioned: Brigadier Stuart; Lieut.-Colonel Turnbull, 1st Troop Horse Artillery, who was wounded; Captain J. G. Lightfoot, 2nd Company Reserve Artillery, who was also wounded; Captain Need; Lieut. Leith, of the 14th Dragoons; Lieut. Armstrong, 86th; Lieut. Prendergast, Madras Sappers and Miners; Major Orr; Captain Prettijohn; Captain Hare; Lieut. Haggard; Lieut.-Colonel Lowth; Lieut. Cochrane, 86th, who had three horses killed under him; Lieut. Mills, 25th Bombay Infantry; Sergt. Gardener, 14th Dragoons, who killed a cavalry soldier and 2 armed infantrymen; Ressaidar Sikander Ali Beg, 3rd Cavalry, Hyderabad Contingent, who was wounded; Ressaidar Allauddin Khan, 1st Cavalry. Sir Hugh also mentioned his own staff officers.

Lieut. Hugh Stewart Cochrane of the 86th, who was also adjutant of the regiment, was awarded the Victoria Cross for "conspicuous gallantry near Jhansi on 1st April, 1858, when No. 1 Company of the Regiment was ordered to take a gun, in dashing forward at a gallop, under a heavy musketry and artillery fire, driving the enemy from the gun and keeping possession of it until the company came up. Also for conspicuous gallantry in attacking the rearguard of the enemy when he had three horses shot under him in succession."

Lieut. Cochrane was born on 4th August, 1829, and was thus 28 when he gained his Cross. He was gazetted in the 86th as an Ensign on 13th April, 1849. He was afterwards transferred to the 7th Fusiliers and promoted Captain. Later he became a Lieut.-Colonel in the 43rd Light Infantry, which he commanded in India from February 1878 until his retirement in 1881 owing to ill-health. He died in 1884 at the age of 55.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Fall of Jhansi

AFTER THE flight of Tantia Topi's defeated army the siege of Jhansi was pressed home with renewed vigour. During the battle of the Betwa River the besieged rebels had redoubled their fire and appeared to be on the point of making a sortie; but they never did. The defeat of Tantia Topi was undoubtedly a severe blow to the morale of the garrison and a most bitter disappointment to the Rani; but she faced the situation with courage and resolution, urging her officers to defend Jhansi to the end. She distributed presents to the defenders and generally displayed great qualities of leadership in what she knew was going to be a desperate ordeal. Riding a white charger she went from point to point encouraging her people and supervising every detail of the defence.

The unceasing fire of the British siege guns however had already done considerable damage and this fire increased in intensity and effect when Sir Hugh's victorious troops returned from their encounter with Tantia Topi's army. His intervention had only delayed the assault on Jhansi by 48 hours. All necessary preparations were made on 2nd April for the assault to begin on the morning of the 3rd. Sir Hugh Rose fully realised how high the morale of his own men had risen as a result of their victory at the Betwa

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and how much this victory had lowered the spirits of the defenders. He was determined therefore to waste no time in taking full advantage of this factor.

Sir Hugh's plan of attack was as follows. There was to be a feint attack on the west wall by a small detachment under Major Gall of the 14th Dragoons. The main attack was to consist of two distinct but co-ordinated operations. The Left attack was to storm the breach at the mound with its main body, while a detachment was to scale the Rocket Tower and the low curtain immediately to the right of it. This Left attack, which was headed by the 86th Regiment, was to be led by Lieut.-Colonel Lowth and Major Stuart, both of the 86th, and supported by the 25th Bombay Infantry. The Right attack was to assault by escalade, its objective being the city wall on either side of the Orchha gate. This was to be led by the 3rd Europeans, supported by the Hyderabad Infantry. The two columns of the Right attack were to be commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Liddell and Captain Robertson, both of the 3rd Europeans. In both attacks the Engineers and Sappers and Miners were of course to play a leading part, but in both attacks Sir Hugh entrusted the initial capture of the city wall to his two British battalions. The two Brigade Commanders commanded the reserves for each of the two main attacks.

The assaulting troops were quietly roused at 2 a.m.; and, at 3 a.m., moved to their forming up positions. Unfortunately it was a bright moonlit night which militated against surprise. The troops lay waiting in suspense as it grew steadily lighter with the approaching dawn.

At last three guns were heard from Major Gall on the west side. This was the signal for the assault to start. The defenders were not caught napping and they immediately opened a heavy fire on all the attacking columns.

In the Left attack, the column under Lieut.-Colonel Lowth forced the breach with comparative ease. Lieut. Jerome, of the 86th, supported by Captains Darby and

Brockman, led the stormers, most gallantly driving the enemy before them. But behind the breach was another high wall 15 to 20 feet thick, with a deep tank in rear of it which was cut from the solid rock. However, over all this the Grenadier Company of the 86th scrambled somehow and the breach and the mound were won.

Meanwhile Major Stuart led his 350 men valiantly forward to assault the Rocket Tower. The Light Company of the 86th Regiment went first; then came 100 men of the 25th; and then two reserve parties of 75 men from each regiment. Ensign Fowler, with a few skirmishers, led the way. This party got within 350 yards of the wall just before daybreak. The wall to be assaulted was about 23 feet high and they went for it despite heavy rifle fire and a cascade of stink-pots, rockets and red hot balls. However the scaling ladders were planted and up rushed Lieut. Dartnell, followed by Ensigns Fowler and Sewell, all of the 86th, with Lieut. Webber, Royal Engineers, and Major Stuart of the 86th, with his men at his heels. Lieut. Dartnell received several sword cuts before Ensign Fowler shot a couple of the former's opponents and thereby saved his life.

A hard struggle then developed to obtain a footing on the wall. Gradually the defenders were pushed back, partly owing to Lieut.-Colonel Lowth having taken them in flank and rear. The Irishmen, with their blood up, pushed resolutely forward; but they suddenly came under severe fire and the 86th lost three officers killed and many men killed and wounded. The three officers were Captain Darby, Ensign Sewell and Lieut. Halroyd, an attached officer. Ensign Sewell was very badly hit, but Lieut. Jerome and Private Byrne carried him away at great risk to their lives. The whole party then retired to the shelter of some houses and took counsel as to how they should proceed. Here Surgeon Stock of the 86th was killed. He was putting a wounded man into a dooly when Major Stuart said to him, "For God's sake take care; the fire is terrific."

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“Never fear,” replied Surgeon Stock; and at that moment fell dead, shot through the heart.

Privates White and McCann of the 86th Regiment had just been shot dead at the same place and the enemy were keeping up a deadly fire when a small native boy, about five years old, came out of one of the houses. He was immediately wounded through the shoulder by a shot from the fort. Private Kavanagh of the 86th rushed out into the street, gathered him up in his arms and carried him to a place of safety. Kavanagh took the boy along with the regiment and carried him to the regimental hospital every morning to have his wound dressed. At the end of the Mutiny campaign Kavanagh took him down to Bombay; and, on embarking for England, handed him over to the Roman Catholic Asylum there.

Both Jerome and Byrne were awarded the Victoria Cross. Jerome had several dates on his Cross—this incident of rescuing Lieut. Sewell on 3rd April; and also for his gallant conduct at the capture of the fort of Chanderi, the storming of Jhansi, and in action with a superior rebel force on the Jumna on 28th May, 1858, when he was severely wounded.

Henry Edward Jerome was born on 2nd February, 1830, at Antigua in the West Indies. He was educated at Sandhurst and was gazetted to the 86th Regiment on 21st January, 1848. He retired in 1885 with the rank of Major-General and died at his home in Bath on 28th February, 1901, at the age of 71.

Private James Byrne enlisted in the 86th. He was wounded by a sword-cut in gaining his V.C., and as a result of his gallantry was promoted Sergeant. Sergeant Byrne died on 6th December, 1872, and his Victoria Cross was sold by auction by Messrs. Sotheby in June 1903 for £35.

Meanwhile in the streets and in the Palace of Jhansi the rebels were putting up a desperate resistance. Some of them took refuge in a large well, from which 13 of them were evicted and captured as the result of a bayonet attack,

led by Havildar Shaik Daoud of the 25th Bombay Infantry.

Things had not gone well with the Right attack, which was led by the 3rd European Regiment. The defenders were very much on the *qui vive* and the advance to the walls was met by a storm of bullets, round-shot and rockets. The Royal Engineers, who carried the scaling ladders, began to fall fast and the party halted in some ruined buildings to re-organise and then made a dash for the wall. They managed to place three ladders, up which ran three very gallant young Sapper officers, Lieuts. Dick, Meiklejohn and Fox. All three managed to get onto the ramparts but the ladders broke under the weight of the men behind them. Meiklejohn jumped down into the rebels below and was cut to pieces, fighting to the last. Dick, wounded in many places by bullets and bayonets, fell dying from the wall; and Lieut. Fox was shot through the neck.

The story goes that Lieut. Dick, some days before the assault, had been carpeted in front of Sir Hugh for trying to shield a Sergeant who had been caught looting, in spite of the most positive orders against such behaviour. Such an example was so fatal to discipline that Dick would have been court-martialled. Sir Hugh is reported to have said to him: "But I have heard of your high promise and good qualities and I cannot subject you to a punishment which would be ruinous to your career, and deprive you of the honour of the assault. I therefore pardon you, I know you will do your duty to-morrow."

On putting his foot on the step of the scaling ladder Dick said to a brother officer, "I never can be sufficiently obliged to Sir Hugh; tell him how I have done my duty."

The whole weight of the assault was now concentrated on the Palace, for which the defenders were determined to put up a desperate resistance. The Rani had been in the thick of the fighting right forward on the walls, wielding her sword to the manner born; but she was reluctantly persuaded to take cover in the fort.

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The situation was looking critical for the attackers when victorious shouts were heard from the 86th Regiment on the Left attack. They had joined up with Captain Robinson of the 3rd Europeans and the latter were then enabled to erect their scaling ladders successfully.

House-to-house fighting continued and the British suffered many casualties, including Lieut.-Colonel Turnbull, 1st Troop Horse Artillery, who was shot through the stomach from a window in the Palace and died of his wounds. Private James Pearson of the 86th won the Victoria Cross for his gallantry in attacking a number of armed rebels and for bringing in Private Michael Burns, who was seriously wounded. Burns died of his wounds later.

Bombardier Joseph Brennan, Royal Artillery, who was attached to the Hyderabad Contingent, also won the Victoria Cross when he brought forward two guns manned by Natives under heavy fire and engaged an enemy battery at point blank range, putting it out of action.

Corporal Michael Sleavon of the Royal Engineers won the V.C. for maintaining his position at the head of a sap under heavy fire with cool and steady determination. He came through the Mutiny and lived another 44 years, dying in London on 14th August, 1902. His V.C. was sold in London four months later for £53.

In the bitter house-to-house fighting there were many hand-to-hand encounters. One of the most remarkable was between detachments of the 86th Regiment and the 3rd Europeans, and some 40 to 50 Walayati sowars, from the Rani's own bodyguard, who had shut themselves up in the stables. The sowars, full of bhang, defended themselves desperately, firing with matchlocks and pistols from the windows and loop-holes and cutting down with their swords anyone who tried to enter. But the attackers pressed their attack home with the bayonet. A party of the rebels remained in one room, which was then set on fire. They were forced out with their clothing on fire, fighting to the last.

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All the sowars were killed in this grim encounter, in which no quarter was asked or given. The attackers captured the Rani's standards, three standards of the body-guard, three kettledrums and an English Union Jack of silk, which Lord William Bentinck had presented to the grandfather of the Rani's husband, with permission to have it carried before him as a reward for his fidelity. The men of the 86th, cheering madly, rushed the flag forward and hoisted it on top of the Palace under heavy fire.

But the defenders continued to fight desperately. Those who were cornered and could not escape threw their women and children down wells and jumped in after them. They were dragged out; the women and children were taken care of and the men killed. One of the Rani's retainers attempted to blow up himself and his wife; failing in the attempt he cut her to pieces with his sword and then killed himself. The records of the 86th show that on this day, 3rd April, they had Surgeon Stock and 7 men killed and 5 officers and 58 men wounded. Many of these died of wounds and most were not fit for any further service.

Meanwhile, the Rani, distressed beyond measure by the shrieks and groans of the wounded and the wailing of the women, assembled her own retainers and told them that she had made up her mind to kill herself rather than surrender. But she was persuaded that this would be a cowardly thing to do and that it would be better for her to try to escape from the city under cover of darkness and continue the struggle outside. There is no doubt that this was wise counsel: the Rani dead would have caused consternation throughout Central India; the Rani alive would be a rallying point and a morale-raiser for the rebels.

At about 4.30 p.m. Sir Hugh Rose received a report that a large body of the rebels, about 400 strong, had tried to escape from the town but had been intercepted and had occupied a high and rocky hill about 600 yards to the west of the fort. They were being watched by cavalry.

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Sir Hugh at once called up all the troops he had available, which consisted of a battery of artillery, some companies of the 24th Bombay Infantry and of the Hyderabad Contingent, and a few Dragoons. The rebels were surrounded and shelled. When they saw that escape was impossible many of them lay down on their powder flasks and blew themselves up. Finally the infantry went in with the bayonet, killing practically every remaining insurgent. In this attack Lieut. Park, 24th Bombay Infantry, was killed whilst gallantly leading his men along the ridge of the hill and about a dozen men were killed and wounded. It was thenceforth known as Retribution Hill.

The Rani's father, Moropant Tambe, was among these rebels and was one of the very few who escaped. He was however wounded in the engagement, was captured some days afterwards and hanged in the Jokan Bagh.

The next day, 4th April, the attack on the city continued. On the west side of the Palace about 1,500 of the rebels concentrated and put up a most determined resistance to the British advance. But they were eventually dispersed and driven back.

Sir Hugh Rose and Brigadier Stuart now occupied the rest of the city by a combined movement, assisted by Major Gall, who scaled the bastions at the Unao gate from his flying camp, captured a gun there and threw it down the rampart.

When the British troops entered the fort they found that the Rani had made her escape during the previous night. She had assembled the members of her household, distributed to them gifts of money and clothing and bade them farewell. Accompanied by some 300 Walayatis and 25 sowars, with Damodar on her back, she left the fort at midnight on her white horse, wearing armour and carrying a dagger and two loaded revolvers. With her departure all serious resistance had ceased and the fort was found to be empty. This was a great stroke of luck for the British as it was a place of immense strength.

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Most unwisely however the Rani had not kept her departure secret and hundreds of her subjects had gathered to bid her farewell with the result that the pickets were aroused. In the confused skirmish which followed the Rani and her party separated. Taking advantage of the confusion she herself escaped in the direction of her intended flight towards Kalpi, accompanied only by a few sowars and her personal woman servant. They were pursued by some cavalry who soon gave up the chase, not being so well mounted and not realising the identity of their quarry.

Next day strong parties of cavalry were at once sent in pursuit, with guns to support them, since it was reported that Tantia Topi had sent a force to meet her. Brigadier Steuart, with some cavalry, was sent to watch the fords at the Betwa.

When nearing Bhandar, 21 miles from Jhansi, the cavalry came in sight of the Irregular Horse sent to meet the Rani. The latter separated into several parties to give the Rani a better chance to escape. Lieut. Dowker, Hyderabad Contingent Cavalry, was sent by Captain Forbes through the town of Bhandar, whilst he himself, with the 3rd Bombay Cavalry and the 14th Dragoons, by-passed it on the left. In the town Lieut. Dowker saw traces of the Rani's hasty flight; there was an unfinished breakfast in her tent, so he knew he was hot on her trail. On the other side of the town he came up with about 40 irregular horsemen and inflicted heavy casualties upon them. He could see the Rani galloping ahead on a grey horse and he was coming up with her fast when he was disabled and dismounted by a sword cut which almost severed his arm. Dowker himself did not relate in his own description of this incident whether it was the Rani herself who disabled him: but Indian authorities all claim that it was indeed the Rani. The story is that the Rani had stopped for food at Bhandar when Dowker and his men came up with her. She was about to leave when he attacked her. But she was too quick

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for him. With a powerful thrust she wounded him so severely that he was thrown off his horse. While Dowker was being assisted by his men the Rani made off.

It has long been a point of some mystery how the Rani and her force of over 300 could have ridden out of the Bhandari gate without challenge, until they ran into some of the piquets outside. An interesting light is thrown upon this by the story told, many years later, by General Lyster, V.C., who was A.D.C. to Sir Hugh at the time.¹

"After dinner one evening," writes Lyster, "Sir Hugh Rose said to me, 'I am very anxious to capture the Rani, but I do not see my way. I should have to take the fort . . . and the troops are few. I should have great loss of life, and as there is much to be done ahead, I can't spare the time. Can you suggest a means of capturing the Rani without loss of life and loss of time?'"

"I thought for a moment and then said, 'Try money!'"

"'I fear,' he replied, 'that would lead to many complications, and it might end in the loss of the money and no result.'"

"I then said, 'Have you any ideas in your head?'"

"His reply was, 'Yes, how would it do to leave them a loop-hole to escape. Suppose I withdrew a picket from the cordon of troops surrounding the town and fort, she could then escape in the night, as, if I carried out my plan in the day, she will come to hear of it at once, and will escape with her women and followers in the night. You know the natives well. Can you tell me if the women of the country are accustomed to ride on horse back, as, if they are not, I can easily have the 14th Dragoons ready to start in the morning, and catch them up before she can have got far.'"

"Next morning the General, myself, and his other A.D.C., Capt. Rose, started to go round the pickets; in one place the General ordered the picket to be withdrawn, thereby leaving a gap of about 400 yards. . . ."

¹ *Memoirs of an Ancient House* by the Rev. Lyster-Denny, M.A.

"In the night we heard heavy firing by the pickets at each side of the gap, firing at the escaping Rani and her followers; but as it was a dark night the firing was at random and no one was hit.

"Early in the morning Sir Hugh Rose was informed of the escape; he at once sent the 14th Dragoons in pursuit. However, we had counted our chickens before they were hatched. The 14th got about 20 miles, and had to give up as the men and horses were quite done; it being extremely hot weather, at 130 degrees in the tents. They came upon the place where the Rani had stopped to have some food and rest, some fires were still alight, and there were fragments of a repast.

"It is surprising that women who had never been on horseback before could have ridden the distance in such a short time."

This interesting tale, doubtless embellished through the years, is inaccurate in some respects, even if it were basically true. But it would suggest an answer as to how the Rani did manage to escape. Sir Hugh was a cunning old fox. The fort, the last remaining part of Jhansi to be conquered, was extremely strong and it might indeed have taken much time and many lives to force. But against the possible truth of this tale are two points which cause one to doubt it. Surely Sir Hugh must have had information of the Rani's prowess on a horse. They had all seen her riding round Jhansi during the siege, encouraging her troops. It seems inconceivable that, having allowed the Rani to escape, he wouldn't have had his cavalry ready to pursue her immediately. On the other hand it is difficult to see how the Rani's party could have covered the distance between the fort gate and the outer gate in the city wall unnoticed unless there had been some plan to let her escape.

It is easy to magnify this remarkable woman into a sort of Joan of Arc—a pure, idealistic martyr for the freedom of her country: it is equally easy to vilify her as the butcher

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of a number of helpless men, women and children, to whom she had promised safe conduct. Historians are divided on this issue. But there is no doubt that at the time of the Mutiny British opinion was almost unanimous that she was a villain. There is one book which is always widely quoted in the historical treatises of that time: it is called *Central India During the Rebellion of 1857 and 1858* by Dr. Thomas Lowe, M.R.C.S.E., L.A.C., who was the Medical Officer to the Corps of Sappers and Miners, who took a leading and distinguished part in this campaign. He sums up the capture of Jhansi as follows:

“After four days hard fighting, Jhansi—city and fort—was in our hands, and a hard gained prize it was. Considering all the difficulties the General had to combat—the heat, the want of provisions, a large fortress and city crowded with the enemy, it is not to be wondered at that our list of killed and wounded numbered upwards of 300.

“In Jhansi we burnt and buried upwards of a thousand bodies, and if we take into account the constant fighting carried on since investment, and the battle of the Betwa, I fancy I am not far wrong when I say that we must have slain nearly 5,000 of the enemy.

“Such was the retribution meted out to this Jezebel Ranee and her people for the heinous crimes done by them in Jhansi. Jhansi will never be forgotten. Next to Cawnpore the massacre was the largest. . . .

“In most of the rooms (of the Palace) we found some relic or other of the unfortunate officers who perished here in the Mutiny. In one room I found the portmanteau of Mr. P. S. York, containing sundry things, and amongst others a copy of Horace, copies of Longfellow and Browning and other books, clothing and plate which showed that the Ranee had not only participated in their murder, but had positively shared in the plunder of their property. The Palace as a building was the most beautiful and richly furnished I have seen in India; exquisite taste and luxury

combined to make it a fitting abode for a worthier princess, although it was surrounded by filthy hovels in the centre of the city.

“Other large houses we found stocked with loot from the dwellings of the Europeans who perished in the massacre. Why they did not destroy these things is a mystery to me, for wherever they were found, death paid for their presence.”

Dr. Lowe says in the preface to his book that he has only described what he saw himself and his preface ends with these words: “I am deeply indebted to Lieutenant-General Sir H. Rose, to whom this narrative was submitted, for his testimony to the truthfulness of the details sketched by my pen, and for the very valuable assistance he rendered in placing at my disposal official and other papers, which I trust will enhance the value of this work.”

Dr. Lowe's book was published in 1860—almost immediately after the events about which he was writing. There is always a difference of opinion as to whether the passage of time tends to clarify or to blur dramatic events of history. Clarification generally depends on the capture or subsequent discovery of contemporary enemy documents, or the release of secret information. But of what the Rani herself said and did during these troublous years there is surprisingly little evidence. The books defending her are of much later date. Certainly it seems true that much of the property of the murdered Europeans was found in Jhansi fort, and in the Palace itself, after its capture. But this does not necessarily prove that the Rani herself was a party to the massacre.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Aftermath of Jhansi

THE RANI, having made good her escape, reached Kalpi by midnight of the 5th April. She had covered over a hundred miles on horseback, over difficult country and after some desperate engagements on the way. Truly she was a remarkable woman with enormous physical resources.

On the same day Tantia Topi also reached Kalpi, which was the headquarters of the rebel Rao Sahib, who had assumed the title of Peshwa at the outbreak of the Mutiny. He was a nephew of the infamous Nana and a boyhood friend of the Rani's.

From the time that the Palace of Jhansi was captured the morale of the rebels had sunk rapidly; and they began to seek refuge in flight. General Rose ordered a vigorous pursuit and a party of the 14th Dragoons alone killed 200 rebels in one patrol. But the more stout-hearted, including a number of Afghans and Pathans, fought to the last and sold their lives dearly. A band of 40 rebels barricaded themselves in a large house with a courtyard and vaults, which was attacked by a party of the Hyderabad Infantry under Captain Hare. Captain Sinclair was killed in this operation. The house was battered to pieces by artillery fire, but the rebels fought on in the vaults until all were killed.

By the evening of the 6th April the city and fort of Jhansi

were in British hands. Considering the heat and the natural strength of Jhansi and the fact that they were heavily outnumbered, Sir Hugh's troops had done magnificently. The memory of the massacre which had taken place there had been avenged in blood, retribution had been terrible indeed. Nevertheless, the first order issued by Sir Hugh after the capture of the city was that destitute and hungry women and children should be fed out of the prize grain.

It was estimated that upward of 5,000 of the rebels were killed, 26 guns were taken in the town and 9 in the fort. The total British casualties were 30 killed and 181 wounded, of whom 22 subsequently died. There was also a good deal of sickness amongst the troops. The heat in the tents was as high as 120 degrees Fahrenheit and in the batteries it was almost unbearable. The Palace was turned into a hospital for the sick and wounded who suffered terribly from the swarms of flies and mosquitoes.

On the 14th April a Christian burial service was read over the pit near the Joka Bagh, into which the bodies of the murdered Europeans had been thrown.

Some authors accuse the British of widespread looting in Jhansi and the carrying away of every sort of ornament, jewelry and so on, including gods from the temples. It is true that the troops had a strong sense of bitterness on account of the massacre and the finding of so many pathetic relics of the dead Europeans in the Palace of Jhansi. But when one thinks of the severe transport restrictions and the burden the men had to carry of their own weapons and equipment in the intense heat, it is difficult to imagine how they could have carried away very much. And Sir Hugh Rose was a strong disciplinarian who had already cracked down pretty sharply on any sign of looting by the troops.

In addition the campaign was not over; they now had to follow the Rani on the long road to Kalpi.

On the much-used road running from Jhansi to Cawnpore, where it crossed the Jumna River, stood the arsenal of

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Kalpi, which was reported to be full of stores and ammunition. It was strongly held by the army of the Rao Sahib. This army consisted of a number of regiments of the Gwalior State troops, several mutinous battalions of Native Infantry, and levies of the Nawab of Banpur and several other rebel Rajas. This Kalpi force was in a position to prevent communications between the British forces in the west and those in east India and could move against either.

Sir Hugh therefore was ordered to take the fortress of Kalpi and defeat the rebel forces there. So, leaving a small garrison in Jhansi, under Lieut.-Colonel Liddell of the 3rd Europeans, he left Jhansi with the 1st Brigade at midnight on 25/26th April up the Cawnpore road, directing the 2nd Brigade to follow two days later.

The garrison of Jhansi consisted of :

Wing of the 3rd Europeans

Wing of the 24th Bombay Infantry

Wing of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry

100 Sabres Hyderabad Cavalry

3 guns of the Bhopal Contingent

It is curious that this fortress garrison should have contained so many cavalry; but perhaps Sir Hugh intended them for communication purposes. Jhansi was now protected from attack by the Kotah rebels, who had been threatening the road from Jhansi to Goona, by the advance of Major-General Roberts with the Rajputana Field Force.

On the night of the 22nd April Sir Hugh had sent forward along the road to Kalpi a small reconnoitring force, under Major Gall (now Brevet Lieut.-Colonel) 14th Light Dragoons, to gain information about the numbers and movement of the rebels, concerning which there had been many conflicting reports. This force consisted of 1 Squadron 14th Dragoons, 3rd Cavalry Hyderabad Contingent and 3 guns Bombay Artillery. Sir Hugh had also sent forward another small reconnoitring force under Major Orr, who was to co-operate with Major Gall. Major Orr was to clear the village

of Mau, on the road from Jhansi to Charkhari, and contact the chief of Gursarai, who was an ally, gain any information from him as to the rebel movements, and then move against Kotra, an important ford said to be occupied by the rebels. Sir Hugh wished to clear Kotra and the line of the Betwa because he thought that the Rajas of Banpur and Shahgarh would annoy his right flank or rear as he advanced on Kalpi.

Major Orr found no enemy at Mau or at Kotra and he made contact with Lieut.-Colonel Gall, who had advanced as far as Punch, about 14 miles from Kunch, where he had found the rebels in force, intending to oppose the advance on Kalpi. Sir Hugh's intention was to join up with Major Orr and Lieut.-Colonel Gall further up the road towards Kalpi.

The hot weather had now really set in and the troops suffered terribly in consequence. The country was flat and without vegetation, the dust being several feet thick on the roads and the heat during the day compelling the troops to march at night. Even so there were a number of fatal casualties from heatstroke and sunstroke. The further the Column advanced the scarcer water became; it was only to be found in small wells of great depth and when found was lukewarm, dirty and brackish.

On the 1st May the 1st Brigade reached Punch, where it was joined by Lieut.-Colonel Gall's force. On the 5th the 2nd Brigade, which had been re-inforced two days earlier by the 71st Highlanders (afterwards the Highland Light Infantry) also arrived.

The 71st Highlanders (1st H.L.I.) were raised in 1777 and, following the Crimean War, they had been quartered in Malta since 1856. The regiment received orders to proceed to India on 2nd January, 1858, and embarked in H.M. ships *Princess Royal* and *Vulture* two days later. They travelled by what was then known as the overland route, across the isthmus of Suez. Disembarking at Alexandria, the regiment travelled across the desert by train for a short distance

and were then mounted on donkeys, with their baggage on camels. This was a great adventure for any infantry regiment.

When they were all mounted the Colonel, who was in great good humour, ordered the buglers to sound the "walk march" followed by the "trot". Even if the Egyptian donkeys could have stomached this the soldiers could not and the whole regiment were on their backs in the sand. The donkeys then took charge and set the pace and the great caravan wended its way slowly across the desert to the Red Sea.

On arrival in Bombay, on 6th and 8th February, the regiment abandoned their scarlet coats and trews and when the right wing left Bombay on 26th February to join the Central India Field Force they were clad in loose, pyjama-like suits dyed in curry powder, with their round forage caps covered with the same cloth, having peaks in front and curtains behind which covered the neck down to the shoulders.

In their first action the Highlanders were thrilled to witness a cavalry charge by the 14th Light Dragoons; but they were not so thrilled when 12 of their own men dropped dead from heatstroke and another 30 lost consciousness. Almost as soon as they arrived the Brigadier collapsed from heatstroke; so their Colonel, Lieut.-Colonel Campbell, took command of the Brigade and Major Walsh assumed command of the 71st. The heat was so terrific that the bagpipes wouldn't pipe and the sweat-soaked men thought longly of the amenities of Malta—and even of the Crimea.

Sir Hugh then sent Lieut.-Colonel Gall, with a mixed force, to deal with the rebel garrison of Lohari, which threatened his advance on Kunch and Kalpi.

Gall marched at 2 a.m. on the 2nd May. His cavalry, consisting of a squadron of the 14th Dragoons and 100 Sabres of the Hyderabad Contingent, pushed forward and soon after daybreak had completely invested the place. The

main body, comprising four guns Royal Artillery, Left Wing 3rd Europeans, Left Wing Bombay Infantry and 20th Bombay Sappers, halted to the east of Lohari fort, and within cannon shot, at 6.30 a.m. The fort and village were situated in an open plain, the village being separated from the fort by about 150 yards. The little fort was square, built of mud and sunburnt bricks, flanked by round towers at each corner, with a ditch and second line of works inside the ditch.

The skirmishers advanced through the village and a company of the 3rd Europeans crossed the open space between the village and the fort and established themselves in the guard house, close to the ditch. Two of the fort gates were opened by Lieut. Armstrong of the 3rd Europeans. These gates were undefended, the garrison having retired and taken post behind a third gate, which was closed.

Gall then directed Captain Field, in command of the artillery, to open fire with two 9-pounders and a 24-pounder howitzer. The rebels replied with matchlocks and a 9-pounder gun which fired grape and round shot alternately.

The walls looked difficult to escalate, so it was decided to blow in the gate. Lieut. Bonus of the Bombay Engineers was detailed for this dangerous task, covered by a storming party of 25 men of the 3rd Europeans, under Lieuts. Armstrong and Donne and Ensign Newport, and an equal number of the 25th Bombay Infantry, under Lieut. Rose. The gate was blown in and the stormers rushed through the smoke and met the defenders, who ran forward to meet them in a hand-to-hand encounter. The storming parties were also assailed by a shower of stones and brickbats from the walls and by burning cloth full of gunpowder which was also dropped from above. The explosion caused by the latter gave some advantage and encouraged the rebels, who pressed forward to close quarters.

Donne and Newport rallied their men bravely but were both severely wounded. Private Frederick Whirlpool of the

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3rd Europeans rushed to the rescue of Lieut. Donne and himself received 17 wounds, one of which nearly severed his head from his body. For his gallantry at Lohari, and for rescuing several wounded men in the attack on Jhansi on 3rd April, Private Whirlpool was awarded the Victoria Cross. He died in New South Wales, Australia, on 24th June, 1899. So they must have sewn his head back on his body quite successfully since he lived another 41 years.

Lieut. Rose then came to the rescue and, cheering lustily, the Europeans and the 25th drove the enemy back. A bloody *melée* then took place in which the garrison came off badly. They broke and fled, hotly pursued by the storming party. A last stand was made by a few desperate men but they were all killed. 57 bodies were counted within the gateway of the fort and all who had endeavoured to escape were cut down by the Dragoons outside or shot down by the infantry. Not one man of the 500 rebels who were supposed to have garrisoned Lohari escaped.

There were several indications of the presence of sepoys amongst the garrison; an army drum and bugle were found in the fort and many brass plates of the 12th Bengal Infantry, which had mutinied at Jhansi; also some regimental coatees.

In this little action Lieuts. Armstrong, Donne and Rose and Ensign Newport were wounded. One man of the 3rd Europeans was killed and 15 wounded; and the 25th Bombay Infantry had 4 men wounded.

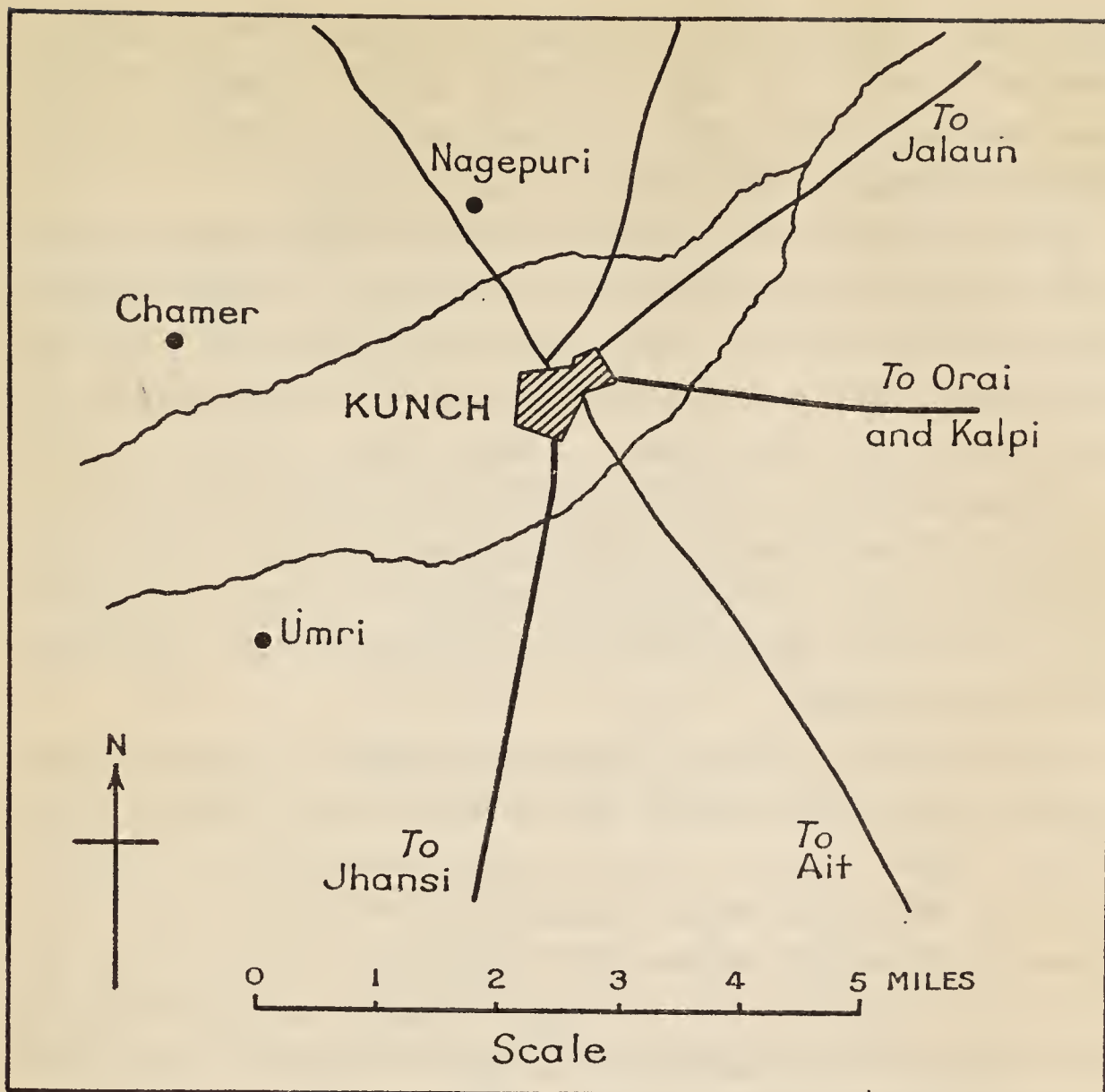
CHAPTER NINE

The Battle of Kunch

MEANWHILE, AT Kalpi, the Rao Sahib had held a grand parade of his troops in honour of the Rani and sought her comments and advice on their bearing and training. This was an extraordinary tribute when one considers that women in India were considered as lesser beings; and even women of high estate and education would not be accepted as authorities on matters of war. But such was the Rani's reputation by then that she was listened to with the greatest respect by Rao Sahib, though this gave rise to some resentment among the other rebel leaders; so much so that Rao was persuaded to appoint Tantia Topi as commander of his army. He would have been better advised to have appointed the Rani, who not only had great prestige but high morale and a real flair for military training and leadership. Tantia Topi had put up such a miserable performance against Sir Hugh at the Betwa that he could hardly have inspired much confidence in the rank and file of Rao Sahib's army.

Nevertheless the Rani still continued to exercise considerable influence on the planning side. She pressed strongly that Tantia's army should not shut itself up within the walls of Kalpi but go forward and meet the enemy on ground of their own choosing. She was the only rebel

THE BATTLE OF KUNCH



leader who had really assimilated the lessons of Sir Hugh's successful operations, which had consisted of defeating his enemy in detail, largely in a succession of siege operations for which the British, with their superior artillery, were so much better equipped, despite their inferiority in numbers. She proposed therefore that Tantia Topi should go forward 42 miles towards Jhansi to the town of Kunch. This was an open town surrounded by thick woods, gardens and temples, with high walls round them. Here they could throw up field entrenchments and create an effective defence.

The Rani's plan was at once accepted and implemented. She did however fail to convince Tantia Topi that he should not commit too much of his force to blocking the obvious

and direct approach from Jhansi, but should keep adequate troops in reserve in case Sir Hugh should attempt to turn one or other of the flanks. The wisdom of her advice became evident as soon as the battle of Kunch began.

In view of the intense heat in which his somewhat weary, but victorious, troops had been operating Sir Hugh wanted to avoid if possible a long drawn-out siege investment of the strong rebel position and he was well aware from his operations up-to-date that an Asiatic Army always expects a frontal attack. He decided therefore on the bold plan of making a flank march by night to the north-west of Kunch with the whole of his force, starting at 10 p.m. on the 6th May, with the object of threatening seriously the rebel line of retreat to Kalpi.

On that day, 6th May, there had been 46 cases of sun-stroke, 14 of them fatal. The mirage in the intense heat, which made the flat, dried-up plain appear like a beautiful lake of water, was something the British troops had never experienced before and it tended to make many of them feel light-headed. Sir Hugh himself suffered a great deal from the heat and was obliged to dismount and seek attention from a doctor before he could resume his duties.

The British advanced across country in three columns. On the left was the 1st Brigade, directed on Nagepuri, which was about two miles on the far side of Kunch. In the centre the 2nd Brigade, under Brigadier Steuart, was directed on the village of Chamar and, on the right, Major Orr's force was directed on the village of Umri. The three columns were directed to effect a lodgement in the town as soon as they advanced from their assembly positions on the morning of 7th May.

It was seven o'clock before the troops sighted the rebels. Sir Hugh, who had marched with the 1st Brigade, ordered them a dram of rum and some biscuit. The men had had nothing to eat that day except the small amount of food they had in their haversacks. The 1st Brigade had already

THE BATTLE OF KUNCH

marched 14 miles from Lohari that morning to get into their position.

Sir Hugh then galloped off to inspect the arrangements made by the other two columns. In an hour he returned and ordered Lieut.-Colonel Gall, with a detachment of cavalry, to reconnoitre the woods, gardens and temples which lay between him and Kunch. At the same time he directed the siege guns to take up a position where they could play upon the town.

Having received Gall's report, Sir Hugh decided to drive the rebels out of the terrain surrounding Kunch and then storm the town, including a dilapidated fort, just opposite the right of the 1st Brigade, on which the rebels' red flag was flying. This movement, together with the pressure exerted by the 2nd Brigade and Major Orr's force on their right, would threaten the line of retreat of more than half the rebel force.

The operation was effected by throwing forward the left wing of the 86th Regiment, under Major Stuart, and the whole of the 25th Bombay Infantry, under Lieut.-Colonel Robertson, both flanks being supported by field guns and cavalry, whilst the remainder of the 86th Regiment, under Lieut.-Colonel Lowth, formed a second line of reserve.

The 25th, advancing in perfect order, cleared the ground to their front and seized some guns, whilst Major Stuart advanced, despite artillery and musketry fire, through the northern part of the town and stormed the fort. The rebels were now streaming out of the town in excellent order but intent on getting away. The 2nd Brigade, to the right of the 1st, owing to some misconception of orders, did not enter the town but moved round south of it, their artillery and cavalry joining in the pursuit of the rebels.

Meanwhile Major Orr had moved as ordered from the village of Umri direct upon Kunch. He was held up temporarily by heavy fire from some gardens and walled enclosures; but the 5th Infantry, strongly supported by

artillery under Captain Douglas, drove the rebels back. At the same time the whole of the Hyderabad Contingent Cavalry charged the rebel horsemen who, the whole time, had been threatening their right flank. They drove them from the field on to the line of the rebels' infantry supports, which occupied several deep ravines and some broken ground from which they opened a heavy fire. The cavalry were subsequently joined by a squadron of the 14th Dragoons and two Horse Artillery guns, under Major Scudamore, and retained possession of their ground until the general advance, when they joined in the pursuit.

The Artillery of the Hyderabad Contingent had meanwhile advanced to within range of the rebel guns, which opened fire from two batteries with round shot, shell and shrapnel, causing several casualties. The rebel infantry, strongly re-inforced, started to push back the attacking infantry. Major Orr was about to counter-attack when he learnt that the 1st Brigade had forced the town and fort. So he directed his advance round the south-east of Kunch towards the Orai-Kalpi road, which was the rebels' main line of retreat.

The whole of the cavalry and artillery of the Force then took up the pursuit; but the infantry were too completely exhausted to co-operate. The rebels commenced their retreat across the plain with resolution and intelligence. The line of skirmishers fought well to protect the retreat of the main body, observing the rules of Light Infantry drill and remembering the lessons which their British officers had taught them so well. There was no hurry and no disorder. When charged they threw aside their muskets and fought desperately with their swords.

An officer who was present said, "Each of the rebels was provided with a Government musket, belt and cartouch box, in capital order and well provided with cartridges. After firing, down went the musket and out came the sharp-cutting native sword. They cut and slashed our horses



Above, the Fort of Barwa Sagar on the Barwar Sagar Lake, near Jhansi. Tantia Topi's Army encamped here before the battle of the Betwa River; *below*, the temple at Jhansi







Above, palaces at Gwalior; left, the principal entrance of Gwalior Fort, conveying a good impression of its immense natural strength

Right, the main top-gate of Gwalior Fort





Tali Munder, Gwalior Fort

THE BATTLE OF KUNCH

and men so long as one of their band remained alive. I counted thirty-six regular sepoy lying dead at that spot. To show the force with which they cut with their native swords it is only necessary to instance Line Sergeant Wilson, who had his bridle arm completely severed above the elbow, and on another occasion the thigh of a Gond was cut through at one blow. On the other hand, I have seen the blunt sword of a dragoon bound off the skull instead of cleaving it; while on the same day a native cut off part of a dragoon's foot, shoe, sole and all!

"I have seen a dragoon cut a man across the face with sufficient force to slice the top of his head off, yet he scarcely cut through the cheek bone. But in spite of all this inferiority of arms, exhausted and almost dying as half the force was, we drove them before us on the Orai road, killed five hundred and took nine guns and a quantity of ammunition. Captain Abbott led his men on with his usual praiseworthy valour and showed that in a pursuit no weapon equals the spear. In this action nothing could have been more praiseworthy than the valour displayed by the sepoy of the late Bengal Army, and nothing more disgraceful than the behaviour of the cavalry, who, in every fight I saw, distinguished themselves signally by cowardice. Tantia Topi's order book was found subsequently at Kalpi and the last order in it expressed his thanks to the spirit and bravery which animated his men at Kunch."¹

The pursuit was commenced by Captain McManus with a squadron and a troop (Blyth's) 14th Dragoons charging the rebel skirmishers. A piece of very heavy plough caused a check in the pace of Captain McManus's squadron, which was thereby exposed to some heavy fire. But the squadron got through and the rebels opposing them, though fighting fiercely to the last, were cut to pieces. Captain McManus received three sabre wounds but continued to command his squadron.

¹ *The Revolt in Central India 1857-59.*

In the centre the Horse Artillery opened a hot fire on the skirmishers, who were drawn back on the right to enfilade the line of pursuit. But Captain Prettijohn charged and cut off this enfilading line. Captain Blyth, 14th Dragoons, and Captain Abbott, 3rd Hyderabad Cavalry, each gallantly charged and captured a gun under heavy fire, and other rebel guns were taken in the course of the pursuit. Lieut. Lyster, Interpreter and A.D.C., who was sent with an order to the cavalry, came across a group of some 30 sepoy, but cut his way through them.

With the greater part of their skirmishers killed, the remainder driven in, and the rebel artillery captured, the main body of the mutineers began to lose their nerve and crowd into the road to Kalpi in helpless confusion. The horses of the British Horse Artillery and cavalry were so exhausted by the sun and by fatigue that they were reduced to a walk. The guns were only able to rake the retreating rebel column with round shot and shell but could not get sufficiently close to use grape.

On reaching some woods and broken ground seven miles from Kunch the rebels broke completely and fled. The scorching rays of the sun and the pace at which they had been forced to retreat in order to avoid encirclement had told severely on them. Several fell dead on the road, many threw away their arms, whilst others, driven half mad by thirst, rushed to the wells regardless of the pursuing cavalry.

But the British, though buoyed up by victory, were even more exhausted, having been 16 hours marching and fighting. A halt was called, the horses were watered and the force marched back to Kunch at sunset. The rebels lost between 500 and 600 men in the action and pursuit and the 52nd Bengal Infantry, which covered the retreat, was almost exterminated. Nine guns and quantities of good English ammunition and stores, furnished to the late Gwalior Contingent, were taken. The British losses were 1 officer and

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7 men killed and 2 officers and 43 men wounded. The cases of sunstroke amounted to 2 officers and 43 men; 12 men of the 71st died from this cause and many more had to go to hospital.

Dr. Thomas Lowe, who was Medical Officer with the Madras Sappers and Miners, in his book, *Central India*, had this to say about drink at this particular juncture of the campaign. "Beer was becoming a most precious possession. No one can imagine the value of a bottle of beer in such a climate save those who have felt what it was to be without one. But one may form a pretty just estimate when I state that as much as eighteen, twenty and twenty-six rupees (52/-) were given, and gladly too, for a single dozen of this sine qua non British beverage. Brandy, arrack and wines of all kinds are comparatively worthless adjuncts to a campaign in India, particularly if it be in the hot season. There is nothing quenches the burning thirst and revives the flagging spirits so satisfactorily as a bottle of cold beer which becomes the very nectar of existence in camp."

The emphasis of course is on *cold* beer: there was no ice in those days—anyway in operations such as this. The thermometer at Kunch registered 118 Fahrenheit in the shade and later on one burst in an officer's tent—at 130 degrees.

The 71st Highlanders doctored their bagpipes with honey and rancid butter. For drinking purposes, lacking any good Highland whisky, they had to make do for an occasional dram with arrack, the fierce country spirit. Water, not the Highlanders favourite beverage, was scarce and foul-tasting and fraught with hazards to the health of newly arrived troops who had had no time to build up any immunity against the many germs.

Tantia Topi, who had abandoned his army before the action was over, came in for severe criticism. The rebel leaders were utterly dispirited, with the single exception of the Rani. But the defeat at Kunch gave rise to all sorts of

animosities. The infantry accused the cavalry and vice versa: the Walayatīs were charged with cowardice: and there was so much defeatism and despair that at one time there were only 11 sepoys in the town and fort of Kalpi, which was still considered a position of great natural strength and the best fortified stronghold in Central and Western India.

However the unexpected arrival at Kalpi of the Nawab of Banda, with a large force of cavalry mutineers, and some guns and infantry, put a very different complexion on matters; and the Nawab's efforts, backed by the energy and confidence of the Rani, produced one of those sudden changes from despair to confidence which marks the Indian character.

The rebel leaders again exhorted the sepoys, as General Rose learnt from an intercepted letter, "to hold to the last Kalpi, their only arsenal, and to win their right to paradise by exterminating the infidel English."

So the rebels returned to Kalpi, re-occupying the strong positions in the labyrinth of ravines which surrounded it, and the entrenchments which they had thrown up. The fort of Kalpi was nothing very much but the general position was extremely strong. In front there were 84 temples, with walls around them, built of solid masonry. The entrenchments were in the front of the temples, which were some three miles from Kalpi, and behind them there was a network of ravines. Finally, there was the fort itself, which stood on a steep and lofty rock springing from the right bank of the Jumna River.

In a despatch, which he sent from Gwalior on 22nd June, 1858, Sir Hugh Rose detailed the difficulties with which he had to contend in the advance on Kalpi—the superior numbers of the rebels and their knowledge of the country; "a Bengal sun at its maximum heat"; and the number of officers and men on the sick list, all of whom had to be carried on the march in doolies. This latter task was a

THE BATTLE OF KUNCH

burden which increased as the advance progressed and it deprived him of much needed fighting men who had to be used for transportation purposes. There were great water difficulties at a time when water was a vital necessity both for men and animals. There were no streams between Jhansi and Kalpi, only wells; and these were neither numerous nor abundant, being of extraordinary depth as the Force approached the Jumna; and this in itself increased the difficulty and the time required to get up the water. Forage was as limited as water. The scarcity of these two essentials detracted from the operational effectiveness of the cavalry and artillery, and of course the transport. The water question made concentration of Sir Hugh's force very difficult, when his inferiority in numbers made this factor so important. The Cavalry were particularly vital in this operation where the rebel cavalry were so numerous. The rebels naturally benefited enormously from their superior knowledge of the locations of wells and streams.

Sir Hugh had stated in his despatch that the possession of Enfield Rifles made up a good deal for his inferiority in numbers; but the heat had had such an effect on the ammunition for these rifles that this advantage no longer existed. Their loading had become difficult and their fire uncertain. An officer present at the Battle of Kunch wrote, "The 3rd Europeans seemed much more annoyed by their useless Enfield rifles than by the sun. No amount of force exerted by the men would drive the bullets down to the breech of their weapons." The 71st Highlanders however benefited much from their careful rifle drill in Malta. One man loaded whilst his comrade fired—and they thus kept up a very steady and controlled fusilade.

Sir Hugh went on to explain in his despatch some of the military disadvantages of his position. The inhabitants of the valley of the Jumna were the most disaffected with which his force had so far met. They had been under rebel rule since the beginning of the Mutiny and had never felt

the influence of British power. Every village had its Mahratta Pundits who had made consistent and successful propaganda in favour of Nana Sahib as Peshwa. The villagers gave every assistance to the rebels, keeping them informed of the British movements and harassing men who fell out of the marching column or who had to go for water at a distance from the road.

Sir Hugh said: "Whilst so many drawbacks weakened me the enemy, physically speaking, were unusually strong. They were under three leaders of considerable influence, Rao Sahib, a nephew of Nana Sahib, the Nawab of Banda and the Rani of Jhansi. *The high descent of the Rani, her unbounded liberality to her troops and retainers, and her fortitude, which no reverses could shake, rendered her an influential and dangerous adversary.*"

"The rebel army was composed of the Gwalior Contingent, the finest men, the best drilled and organised native troops of all arms in India; other mutinous Bengal Infantry regiments, such as the 52nd; rebel cavalry from Kotah, and a chosen band of Walayatīs; the whole re-inforced by the force of all arms of the Nawab of Banda, comprising a great deal of mutinous Bengal Cavalry, of which the 5th Irregulars, dressed in their red uniforms, formed a part. All the sepoy regiments kept up carefully their English equipment and organisation; the words of command for drill, grand rounds etc., being given, as we could hear at night, in English."

This then was the situation with which Sir Hugh had to cope in order to take Kalpi. It was not an easy prospect.

CHAPTER TEN

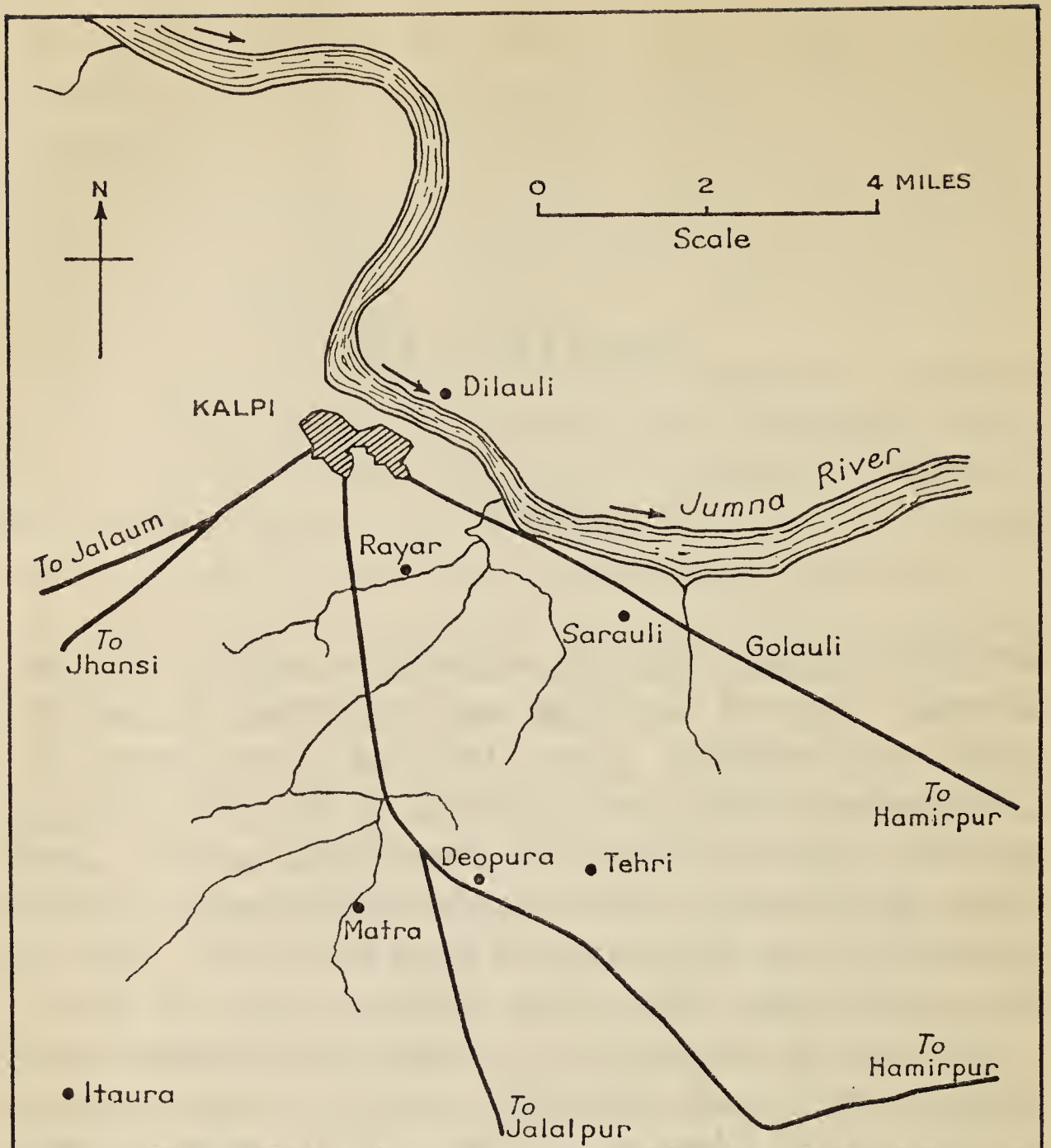
Kalpi

DESPITE THE fact that his ammunition supply was considerably depleted Sir Hugh was determined to give the rebels no breathing space. He had heard from the Commander-in-Chief that Colonel G. V. Maxwell had been detached, with the 88th Foot, some Sikhs, and the Camel Corps, to co-operate with him. He had written to Colonel Maxwell to say that he would meet him on the banks of the Jumna, a few miles below Kalpi, on the 14th May.

At 2 a.m. on the 9th May Sir Hugh marched from Kunch with his 1st Brigade. Sir Hugh, as was his usual custom, sought to avoid a head-on collision with the entrenchments and fortifications which had been set up to impede his advance on Kalpi. He determined therefore to turn them from the right, by branching off the Orai-Kalpi road to Golauli, about five miles from Kalpi. He hoped there to effect a junction with Colonel Maxwell—who was to bring up ammunition for the siege of Kalpi—and then, his right resting on the Jumna, and covered by Maxwell's column, to advance up the river against Kalpi. The Jumna was fordable at Golauli which stood in the nullah running down to the river, just outside the dangerous labyrinth of ravines surrounding Kalpi.

To mislead the rebels and draw attention away from the

THE REBELLIOUS RANI



The battle of Kalpi

movement of the 1st Brigade, the 2nd Brigade was ordered to close up to Orai from Kunch and take up a position at the village of Bhandra; but in the darkness they missed their way and followed the 1st Brigade, having had to make a double march in the process. Their long exposure to the sun during this protracted march caused a great many casualties.

Sunstroke, heatstroke and heat exhaustion were far greater enemies to the British force than the rebels and the shortage of water accentuated these difficulties. Brigadier Steuart of the 2nd Brigade, and the whole of his staff, were on the sick list at one time and Sir Hugh had had five

slight sunstrokes; but he was so mentally tough and determined that nothing would deflect him from his task.

Command of the 2nd Brigade had developed upon Lieut.-Colonel Campbell of the 71st Highlanders (The H.L.I.). The transportation and care of the increasing numbers of sick had now become an almost intolerable burden. Both Brigades however were concentrated without opposition on the night of the 14th and the 1st Brigade then advanced to Golauli and established communication with Colonel Maxwell, who was some 30 miles away on the other side of the river. Sir Hugh sent him a message requesting him to move up the river immediately. He also ordered up two pontoon rafts, which he had brought with great trouble and foresight from Poona, for communication with Colonel Maxwell as the enemy had destroyed or removed all the boats.

On the morning of the 15th the rearguard of the 2nd Brigade, under Major Forbes, was vigorously attacked by a large force of rebel cavalry dressed in their regimental uniforms—some in red, others in light grey and green and a few in yellow—with three to four thousand infantry and some guns, drawn by elephants. Having received a report that Major Forbes was hard pressed, Sir Hugh himself marched to the latter's assistance with a troop of Horse Artillery, a troop of the 14th Dragoons, a troop of the Hyderabad Cavalry, 3 Field guns and the 38th and 25th Regiments of Native Infantry.

Sir Hugh never did things by halves. When he hit, he hit hard and quickly and with the utmost drive and determination. A lesser commander, mindful of his numerical inferiority and the growing weakness of his troops from the intense heat, would have sent the minimum force, which would have effected nothing and been a grave waste of his resources. Even as it was, a very sticky situation was only saved by the leadership of the General and the admirable staying power of the troops. The rebels knew well that the sun was Sir Hugh's greatest enemy and they

strove therefore to keep him and his troops out in it as much as possible. Sir Hugh, though he never yielded an inch to the rebel attacks, husbanded the health and strength of his force for the one decisive battle he planned to fight for Kalpi.

On the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th constant skirmishing took place, the rebels being the attacking party. On the 19th a British mortar battery began to shell the town. On the 20th Colonel Maxwell, whose principal strength consisted in 458 Sikh Police and 573 of H.M. 88th Regiment, sent two companies of the latter and 124 of the Police over the river to re-inforce the ranks of Sir Hugh's much depleted (through sickness) force.

The 88th (Connaught Rangers), afterwards the 1st Battalion The Connaught Rangers, were quartered at Aldershot when, in June 1857, they were moved to Portsmouth preparatory to embarking for India. The regiment, with a strength of 990 of all ranks, besides the depot of 100, embarked in four detachments. The first, consisting of three companies under Lieut.-Colonel E. H. Maxwell, embarked in the *Ulysses* on 10th July; Headquarters, with three companies and the band, embarked in the *Surrey* on 15th July; and the remainder on the *Calabar* and *Cambodia* on 17th and 19th July. Ten companies altogether sailed, leaving as a depot the cadres of two companies. The vessels arrived in Calcutta between the 1st and 23rd November—a very trying voyage of 3½ months.

The posting of the 88th to India at this particular time was not due to some brilliant inspiration on the part of the higher command. It was a purely routine move. When they embarked the news of the first outbreak of mutiny had only just reached England. As the long voyage round the Cape in sailing ships, without touching land, brought the Connaught Rangers to Bengal with no news from the outside world, they were very bewildered when the lightship at the mouth of the Hoogly signalled "Delhi is taken". It

was not until the pilots came aboard that they first heard any account of the great Sepoy Mutiny.

The 88th had certainly arrived at a very critical time. Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief in India, had sent instructions that they should be despatched up country immediately just as they got off the boats. There was no time for them to get suitable clothing or to organise themselves in any way. Each boatload was railed to Raniguny and thence transferred to bullock-carts until, on 21st November, Cawnpore was reached. They were then at once involved in the operations for the relief of Lucknow.

After various vicissitudes they became part of Colonel Maxwell's (their commanding officer) column for the attack on Kalpi, which turned out to be one of the fiercest in the Mutiny.

The Rifle Brigade, which had been armed with the Minie Rifle during the Crimea, was armed with the short Enfield and sword bayonet before the Mutiny.

The Camel Corps was formed at Lucknow on 5th April, 1858, by drafts of 100 men from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Rifle Brigade, to which were eventually added 200 Sikhs. The men were each mounted on a camel with a native driver. To start with the men found camel riding a very unsafe and uncomfortable method of travel, but with practice they started to get the idea. When however they were required to mount the camels with their full arms and equipment they were in a real tangle. But the British soldier is nothing if not adaptable and his sense of humour generally gets him over difficulties which might reduce other nationals almost to tears. This Corps was duly inspected by the Commander-in-Chief and, within a month of their formation, they had joined Colonel Maxwell's Force. By this time they could move for a limited period at the trot in comparative comfort.

On the 21st May, at 1 a.m., they crossed the Jumna River to join Sir Hugh Rose. The ford was so deep that the water

was up to the saddles of the camels. After the riflemen had crossed over, 200 camels were sent back across the river under Lieut. Eyre to bring over part of the 88th Regiment.

Sir Hugh was determined to deliver his decisive assault on Kalpi on the 22nd. Time was not on his side; the monsoon was approaching which, though it would bring some alleviation of the heat, would make movement difficult, and his sick list was increasing every day. The rebels, realising that the crisis was approaching, were determined to meet it offensively. On the 20th May they advanced through the ravines and attacked the British right flank with the greatest resolution. Re-inforcing the piquets with four companies of the 86th Regiment, under Major Stuart, two companies 25th Bombay Infantry and three 9-pounders, Sir Hugh simply directed them to hold their ground, which they did steadily and gallantly and drove the enemy back, though losing in casualties 4 officers and 40 rank and file.

The next day, 21st, Sir Hugh received information that the rebels intended to make a general attack on his position at Golauli next morning. They had sworn an oath on the sacred waters of the Jumna that they would drive his force into the river—or die in the attempt. Afterwards they intended to march south against General Whitlock at Banda. A large ration of opium was to be issued to the assaulting troops, which, provided he is not an opium addict, can keep a man going long after exhaustion, wounds and suffering should have made him a stretcher case.

The British Force was disposed as follows, ready to meet the threatened attack: The right flank, facing the north-eastern side of Kalpi, rested on the ravines running down to the Jumna in which were situated the villages of Golauli and Sarauli. The British position ran from there across the Kalpi-Sarauli road, in the continuation of the belt of ravines. All this right portion of the front was held by the 1st Brigade under Brigadier Stuart. The 2nd Brigade and the Hyderabad Field Force held the open table-land on the left,

KALPI

stretching from Golauli across the Kalpi-Jalalpur road. This part of the position was well adapted to the operation of cavalry and artillery. The whole front was covered by strong outposts and piquets. The 86th Regiment and the 3rd Europeans were on the right of the position, with their flank resting on the river. In support they had three guns of the 4th Light Field Battery, the 25th Bombay Infantry, less four companies, and the 21st Company Royal Engineers. The whole of this forward right flank defence was under command of Lieut.-Colonel Robertson, 25th Regiment.

The left centre, facing the plain and the village of Tehri, was guarded by No. 1 Troop Bombay Horse Artillery, supported by two troops 14th Dragoons. The siege guns, two 18-pounders, one 24-pounder and two 8-inch howitzers, guarded by detachments of the 3rd Europeans, were supporting the centre of the position with one troop of the 3rd Light Cavalry, a wing of the 71st Regiment, one squadron 14th Dragoons, a troop 3rd Light Cavalry, and Captain Field's Royal Field Artillery 9-pounders. The left was formed by the Camel Corps and No. 18 Field Battery, supported by a detachment of the Sikh Corps, the Hyderabad Field Force covering the extreme left. Two companies of the 88th Regiment, whose strength had been much weakened by sun casualties, and four companies of the 25th Bombay Infantry, were left for camp protection.

At 8 a.m. on the 22nd May, the rebels were reported to be advancing in great force from Kalpi against the British left, on the general line of the Kalpi-Jalalpur road. This attack, led by the Nawab of Banda and Rao Sahib, though only intended as a feint, made a big showing with a large force of cavalry, several battalions of infantry, and horse artillery, and posed a strong threat to the British left flank.

Sir Hugh was still convinced that the rebels' main attack would come against his right and he refused to do more than reply to the rebel horse artillery fire with his own guns, but he did not withdraw a man from his right, even

when the threat to his left appeared to be becoming serious. He merely re-inforced the piquets on the left with a squadron of the 14th Dragoons, under Colonel Gall, and the 3rd Cavalry, Hyderabad Contingent, under Captain Abbott. Although the British cavalry drew back to draw the rebel cavalry on, the latter never came within charging distance and suffered a number of casualties from the British siege guns firing from the centre.

Sir Hugh then pushed a company of the 3rd Europeans forward into the ravines on his extreme right and they discovered the rebels' main attack cleverly hidden from view. At once a general engagement started along the whole front from the Jumna to the village of Tehri. The whole line of ravines became enveloped in smoke; the guns on both sides came into action and the rebel infantry poured a heavy musketry fire against the right of the British line.

The suddenness of the attack, coupled with their greatly superior numbers and the extreme heat, gave the rebels an initial advantage. Under cover of this the rebel sepoys emerged from their concealment and pressed forward in thick lines of skirmishers, followed by massive columns of supporting troops. The situation became critical; many of the British Enfield rifles had become clogged by constant use in all weathers; the sun was now burning down with full force and the British were falling back.

The Camel Corps had just sat down to their breakfast when they were ordered to hold themselves in immediate readiness. Soon a staff officer came up in great excitement and ordered them to advance on the right flank. They found that the rebels were driving in the piquets and were in some places almost on top of the gun positions.

The Riflemen jumped off their camels and with a ringing cheer charged into the rebels, who gave way and retired before them. Many a battle has been lost through a general throwing in his reserves prematurely, just as others have been lost because a general, who had kept some reserves

in hand, failed to use them before it was too late. Sir Hugh had avoided the first error and had not used his reserves to counter the rebels' feint attack against his left. Now however he sensed that the crisis of the battle was approaching. He had received an urgent request from Brigadier Stuart for re-inforcements and he at once decided to take the whole of the Camel Corps, consisting of the Rifle Brigade and the 88th Regiment, under Major Ross, to Stuart's assistance.

The sepoys, mad with opium and fury, were sweeping forward, yelling with triumph as they saw the 86th and 25th Native Infantry falling back towards the positions of the mortar-battery and the three 9-pounders. The *History of the Royal Irish Rifles* records that at this juncture "Brigadier Stuart came up to Major Stuart of the 86th and, drawing his sword, said to him, 'Stuart, we have nothing to do but die like Scotchmen'."

The moment was critical indeed when the Camel Corps, with Sir Hugh Rose at their head, reached the rising ground on which the guns were situated and, dismounting quickly, doubled up the rise in perfect order. They were greeted with volleys of musketry which killed or wounded every horse but one of the General's staff. The guns had ceased firing and Brigadier Stuart had ordered the gunners to draw their swords and defend themselves as best they could.

Without halting on the crest Sir Hugh charged down it, with the Camel Corps, into the dense line of the mutineers who outnumbered him by ten to one. The gallant soldiers of the Rifle Brigade and the 88th, cheering loudly, closed with the rebels. For a moment the rebels stood; then they wavered and fled, pursued by the Camel Corps through the ravines, where numbers of them were bayoneted or killed by musketry fire. Sir Hugh quickly ordered the guns forward to a position from which they could fire grape shot at the nearest rebels and round shot at the masses in the rear.

It was the Camel Corps which had saved the day, but

they suffered so severely from the sun in their violent pursuit of the rebels up and down the rocky ravines that they had to be withdrawn after they had taken the commanding ridge between the position and Kalpi. In these operations, as at Kunch, the sun was the worst enemy to the British soldier. Not only had the rebel attacks against the British right been repulsed with heavy loss, but Sir Hugh at once took advantage of the situation by advancing to the attack himself. It was not a case of striking whilst the iron was hot—everything was hot—but Sir Hugh quite rightly thought that his troops would forget about the heat more easily in mopping up the enemy than if he had given them time to lie down and mop their own brows.

Lieut.-Colonel Lowth, with some of his 86th Regiment, moved forward through the ravines on the extreme right and cut off and surrounded a considerable body of the mutineers. Part were killed on the river banks and the rest were driven into the river and either shot or drowned.

Simultaneously with their main attack against the British right the rebels had made a strong attack on the right-centre, which was guarded by part of the 25th Bombay Native Infantry. Despite a gallant resistance the 25th were driven back by sheer weight of numbers; but the 21st Company Royal Engineers, who fought as well in the field as they worked on the entrenchments, charged, under Lieut. Edwards, and flung back the rebels. The remainder of the 25th, guarding the left-centre, under Lieut.-Colonel Robertson, held their ground though the rebels pressed them closely whilst reproaching them bitterly for their allegiance to the British. The 25th answered them by a charge with the bayonet.

The whole British line now advanced. The left-centre, under Colonel Robertson, came up with the rebels near the village of Tehri, bayoneted many of them and continued the pursuit until they were quite exhausted. The infantry on the left wheeled to the right, covered by Captain Light-

foot's troop of Horse Artillery and three guns of No. 4 Light Field Battery, and, with the whole of the cavalry, made a converging movement on the rebels' right and the village of Tehri. The rebel right broke and fled, pursued for some miles by the Horse Artillery and the cavalry.

In this day's fighting the rebels had displayed resolution and a tactical sense far above anything they had shown before and, although the exact part played in the battle by the Rani is not known, it is certain that she not only influenced the planning but was herself well forward in the attacks, encouraging and directing the rebel troops. It is said that she herself led the vital charge which so nearly routed Brigadier Stuart in the crucial phase of the battle. If only the other rebel leaders had been of the same calibre as the Rani, who knows what might not have happened. For although Sir Hugh out-generalled the rebels, it was because they lacked the leadership required at the sticking points that they were so often defeated. How many times in the campaign has it been said, "the rebels broke and fled." Yet they constantly outnumbered the British, were well-equipped and fought bravely. The Rani not only assimilated the lessons of the campaign, but understood that, when the chips are down, personal leadership and determination can work miracles. Sir Hugh and the Rani were two of a kind. Both understood what had to be done—and did it. The difference lay in the support they received from their own people. This campaign must have been one of the last ever to be fought in which the leading protagonists took part in the actual battle and, by *personal* leadership, influenced the result. The numbers engaged were relatively small, the weapons for the most part personal and the scope of the battles narrow enough for the top leadership to be actively directing operations in person.

With the rout of the rebel army the Rani also had to flee. It is reported that she slept that night under a tree, which was as well for her, as one of the shells from the

mortar batteries burst in her room at Kalpi and killed two of her attendants.

Sir Hugh was determined to follow up his success without giving the rebels time to recover their morale or to reform their forces. Accordingly he divided his troops into two attacking columns; and, giving them only a short time to feed and rest, he marched on Kalpi next morning well before daybreak. During the fight the mortar batteries on the other side of the Jumna had cleared the village of Rayar and subsequently kept up a fire on the fort and town at Kalpi. The right column, under Brigadier Stuart, advanced with their right on the Jumna; the left, under Sir Hugh's personal command, advanced along the Kalpi-Jalalpur road. Sir Hugh's column, covered by the Camel Corps and the Hyderabad Contingent Cavalry, was fired on from long range by a rebel battery, which was quickly silenced. Brigadier Stuart's column met with no opposition until the village of Rayar was reached, when the 86th Regiment was fired on, but they at once charged and drove the rebels out. Kalpi town and fort were both found to be deserted.

The Rao Sahib, the Rani and the Nawab of Banda had all fled during the early morning. The Rani went with the Rao Sahib to Gopalpur, about 46 miles from Gwalior, where they were soon joined by Tantia Topi and the Nawab of Banda.

A mobile force, under Lieut.-Colonel Gall, consisting of 4 troops of the 14th Dragoons (153 sabres), 6 guns of the Horse Artillery, the 3rd Hyderabad Contingent Cavalry and the 1st Hyderabad Contingent Cavalry (50 sabres) was sent in pursuit of the rebels, who were observed moving off from Kalpi north-east in large bodies, accompanied by elephants.

Gall pursued them along the Kalpi-Jhansi road, which diverges to Jalaun at about three miles from Kalpi. The rebels were charged and cut up in all directions, two guns

being captured by the 1st Cavalry under Lieut. Dowler. The Dragoons sabred numbers of the fugitives who were completely panic-stricken by the speed and unexpectedness of the attack. From uniform buttons which were found it appeared that not less than 11 Gwalior and Bengal Infantry regiments were among the rebels. Captain Abbott captured a 9-pounder gun along the Jalaun road and all the rebels' five guns, artillery wagons, ammunition and bullock carts were captured, as well as six elephants and some camels and bullocks.

This cavalry and horse artillery operation illustrates, first, the very great virtue of having mobile troops in this campaign; and secondly, the importance of using them boldly against a defeated enemy. Although they introduced grave difficulties in this sort of terrain, where watering and grazing for animals were so scarce and took so long to obtain—and although there were times when they did not seem worth their keep, particularly during siege operations—yet they were so invaluable when the time and the situation were ripe that they were in fact worth their weight in gold. Time and again they turned what might have been an orderly retreat into a rout.

Kalpi was an arsenal containing large quantities of ammunitions of war. It was obvious that the rebels had meant to make it the centre of a protracted resistance. Had they expected the rapid reverse they suffered they would never have allowed so large an arsenal, much of it in perfect condition, to fall into British hands. There was a good British 18-pounder gun; three cannon and mortar foundries; a very complete and substantial subterranean arsenal containing 60,000 pounds of British powder; every description of warlike stores and ammunition; numerous boxes of new and old British muskets; quantities of British shot and shell, of which there were also piles outside the arsenal in the fort; engineering tools of all kinds; boxes of brass shells of native manufacture; 27 silk embroidered standards of the

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Gwalior Contingent, bearing Sindhia's device, and one of the Kotah Contingent. There was saltpetre, sulphur and coal; tools looted from British arsenals elsewhere; bales of cloth, military caps, boots and jackets; medical stores, looted from Cawnpore and Agra; trumpets, bugles, drums; a ream of paper and official documents. A box containing important correspondence belonging to the Rani was also found in the fort.

British casualties in this operation amounted to 24 killed and 43 wounded, excluding the much larger losses from sunstroke and sickness. The European sick and wounded were then evacuated to Cawnpore. Sir Hugh Rose himself had suffered five times from sunstroke and for that reason was unable to write his despatch on the operations until a month later.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Rani's Bold Plan

THE CAPTURE of Kalpi completed the plan of campaign for the Central India Field Force, which Sir Robert Hamilton had submitted to the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief towards the end of 1857. Since November of that year, in five months, Sir Hugh Rose had traversed Central India, crossed numerous rivers, taken many towns and defeated rebel armies of greatly superior strength to his own: and he had accomplished these things during a season of terrible heat where the sun was often more deadly than the weapons of the rebels.

There is no doubt that a great deal of the success of these operations was due to the character and determination of Sir Hugh himself. He believed in the commander being well forward in the battle, where he could get early information of its progress and take immediate action in any eventuality. He was completely careless of his own personal safety. On the other hand he was constantly concerned for the comfort and well-being of his troops in circumstances where precious little comfort was possible; and it was the confidence they had in him, and his solicitude for them, which endeared him so much to the men in the ranks. But he drove them hard, when necessary, just as he drove himself.

The whole campaign appeared to be over. Lord Canning, the Governor-General, sent Sir Hugh a congratulatory telegram and Sir Hugh issued a stirring Order of the Day to his troops. He said: "Soldiers! You have marched more than a thousand miles and taken more than a hundred guns. You have forced your way through mountain passes, and intricate jungles, and over rivers. You have captured the strongest forts and beat the enemy, no matter what the odds, whenever you have met him. You have restored extensive districts to the Government, and peace and order now where before for a twelvemonth were tyranny and rebellion. You have done all this, and you have never had a check. I thank you with all my sincerity for your bravery, your devotion, and your discipline.

"When you first marched I told you that, as British soldiers, you had more than enough of courage for the work that was before you, but that courage without discipline was of no avail, and I expected you to let discipline be your watchword. You have attended to my orders. In hardships, in temptation and danger you have never left your ranks. You have fought against the strong, and you have protected the rights of the weak and defenceless, of foes as well as of friends.

"I have seen you in the ardour of the combat preserve and place children out of harm's way. This is the discipline of Christian soldiers and it is what has brought you triumphant from the shores of Western India to the waters of the Jumna, and established without doubt that you will find no place before which the glory of your arms can be dimmed."

The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, now put in hand the necessary arrangements for the disbandment of the Central India Field Force and Sir Hugh was to give up his command and be granted a period of sick leave, which he badly needed.

A number of awards and promotions were made to British and Indian ranks of the Force. These included

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promotion to Lieut.-Colonel for Major W. A. Orr and the C.B. and a Brevet-Majority for Lieut. H. C. Dowker, who had so nearly captured the Rani. Nine Native officers of the Hyderabad Contingent were made Companions of the Order of British India; 71 Orders of Merit and 100 special promotions were given to Native ranks. Among the most distinguished Native officers who were rewarded was Risaldar-Major Nawab Ahmed Baksh Khan of the 3rd Cavalry, Hyderabad Contingent, whose brave conduct in many actions had been outstanding. He died in 1906 at the age of 93 years. Throughout the campaign Jemadar Vilayat Ali Beg, whose son was Commander-in-Chief of the Nizam's army, had been personal orderly to Sir Hugh, who presented him with a sword of honour. The loyal Native officers, other ranks and private servants had indeed played a valuable part in the campaign, as in so many other actions in the Mutiny.

But before Sir Hugh had left for Poona, news was received of an event which, in the words of the Calcutta Gazette newspaper, "caused throughout India a sensation hardly less than that caused by the news of the first mutinees in 1857."

Tantia Topi, after his defeat at Kunch, had fled to Chirki, about four miles from Jalaun, and there he remained during the events which led up to the capture of Kalpi. Hearing that the Rao Sahib and the Rani of Jhansi had fled, after their defeat at Golauli, to Gopalpur, 46 miles south-west of Gwalior, and had been joined there by the Nawab of Banda, Tantia decided to join them at that place. Their situation seemed desperate indeed. They had been defeated in a succession of engagements; they had suffered disastrous losses in men, artillery and munitions; and the morale of their followers was low. On all sides they were threatened by British columns intent on bringing the Mutiny campaign to a speedy conclusion. These rebel leaders could certainly expect short shrift if they were captured. They were all

anxious therefore to continue the fight—if they could only think of a way. It was the indomitable and resourceful Rani who proposed a plan which at once commended itself to the other rebel leaders. And a brilliant plan it was.

The whole Mahratta military tradition had been based upon the possession and defence of impregnable fortresses. It was true that they had lost several of these—and vital ones they had been; but there was yet another in the vicinity which was perhaps the mightiest of them all—and that was the fortress of Gwalior which belonged to the Maharaja Sindhia, one of the most powerful of the independent princes of India.

Throughout the Mutiny, the Maharaja, with a considerable army, had remained a loyal ally of the British. The rebels therefore would either have to cajole or defeat him. It appeared a desperate venture; and in fact only possible if they could make some religious or national appeal to the Maharaja's troops.

The Maharaja of Sindhia had already played a very important part in the Mutiny and in the first desperate four months he quite possibly had the fate of India in his hands. He was the most important Mahratta chief and his word, if spoken on behalf of his race or religion, would have carried the greatest possible weight throughout central and western India. But that word was not spoken. Had he revolted, the effect on the seige of Delhi, the defence of Agra, and many other places, might have been catastrophic for the British: and in the closing stages of the campaign the loyalty of Sindhia was a very powerful factor for the latter.

The Sindhia was loyal to the British more from necessity than choice. Thirteen years earlier he had tried conclusions with them and had been badly beaten. He had visited Calcutta early in 1857 and been much impressed with British power. Nevertheless, when the Mutiny started, there were few Indian princes who had a more difficult decision

to make. He was a descendant, and now the representative, of the famous Mahratta leaders who had fought against the British in their early days of conquest. In deciding to remain loyal at the outbreak of the Mutiny he was greatly influenced by his very able Political Agent, Major Charters Macpherson, and by his own Chief Minister, Raja Dinkar Rao. But neither Sindhia nor Dinkar Rao liked the British—they only wanted to be on the winning side and they didn't want to exchange the security and affluence which they held for a nebulous future which might lead them into the abyss. Moreover, the Maharaja was divided from the majority of his subjects by racial differences. If the British control disappeared he might be removed from his throne by internal revolts. So he cast in his lot with the British in the belief that this was the best course for himself and his people, but in the knowledge that a great many of his subjects might be more in sympathy with the mutineers.

When the Mutiny started, a detachment of the Maharaja's bodyguard was sent to Agra, but the Sindhia had no confidence in the Gwalior Contingent, which was raised, trained and officered by the British. It consisted of the same elements as the rest of the Bengal Army and, sure enough, when the Mutiny broke out in other stations the sepoy of the Gwalior Contingent also rose.

Major Macpherson had moved from the Cantonment to the Residency, which was guarded by Sindhia's own troops. The British families were sent to one of Sindhia's palaces; but later, on the advice of Brigadier Ramsay, the military commander, they were returned to the Cantonment. The British residents lived in a state of constant fear and on the night of 14th June, 1857, their nightmare came true. The mutineers didn't kill the women, but all the officers were massacred, with the one exception of Lieut. Pearson, who was saved by his own sepoy. The Political Agent, with a few others, and the women, found refuge in the palace and were later escorted to Agra.

The astute Major Macpherson advised the Maharaja to keep the mutineers in his service and continue to pay their salaries. By this means they were prevented from operating against the British forces at this critical time—and they did not do so until the September of 1857.

Despite all the early disasters, and the subsequent setbacks which befell the British, the Maharaja and Dinkar Rao still thought that in the end they would come out on top; and these feelings were strengthened by the fall of Delhi, the relief of Lucknow and British successes in north-west and central India. But many of the influential families of Gwalior, together with the bulk of the army and the people, became increasingly of the opposite opinion and they brought more and more pressure to bear on Sindhia to throw in his lot with the rebels and deliver a mortal stab in the back to the British.

Such then was the state of affairs when, on the evening of 30th May, 1858, the Maharaja was informed that Topi, the Rani and Rao Sahib, with other chieftains, and a force estimated at 7,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry and 12 guns had reached Morar, just outside Gwalior.

When the Rani had propounded her bold plan it was at once realised by the rebel leaders that they would have to win over the Gwalior troops. Tantia Topi volunteered for this task. He knew Gwalior well. He had already induced the Indian regiments there to revolt in the previous September and he had many friends inside the city. He soon discovered that Sindhia's army was divided in its loyalty. Many of the officers and men, though not actually disloyal to Sindhia, thought he should support the Peshwa, to whose house he owed his kingdom. They promised to offer no resistance if the Rao Sahib advanced on Gwalior. On the other hand Rao Sahib hoped to get the willing co-operation of the Maharaja, so he sent courteous messages declaring that the rebels had no hostile intentions, but only wanted money and supplies.

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The Maharaja, though well aware of the very doubtful loyalty of some of his own troops, and misled by derogatory reports concerning the strength and morale of Tantia's force, decided on the bold but rash course of sallying forth to do battle with the rebels. He would have done better to have taken Dinkar Rao's advice and awaited their attack behind the strong ramparts of Gwalior fort—though the result would probably have been the same.

At daybreak on the 1st June he marched out of Gwalior with 7,000 infantry, 1,500 cavalry and 8 guns, together with his own bodyguard of 600 picked men; and took up a position at Bahadurpur, two miles east of the rebel forces at Morar.

The rebels advanced to meet him behind a line of mounted skirmishers which, when artillery fire was opened on them, closed to the flanks to clear the way for a cavalry charge on Sindhia's centre by 2,000 rebel horsemen. Instead of the cavalry being mown down by the concentrated fire of Sindhia's unbroken infantry, it at once became apparent that the Maharaja's army was not going to fight—and indeed showed every sign of joining the rebels. Tantia's men raised a loud shout of "Din" and Sindhia's troops replied in the same way.

The bodyguard fought bravely to protect the Maharaja; but he, realising that further resistance was hopeless, turned and fled with a few of his followers and did not draw rein until he reached Agra.

The first part of the Rani's plan therefore was a hundred per cent successful. The rebels entered Gwalior fortress, considered to be one of the strongest in India, with only token resistance and took possession of its fine arsenal, stocked with guns, munitions and stores, and also its rich treasury. The treasures of the Maharaja were taken to pay generous rewards, both to Scindhia's mutinous troops and to Tantia's. The Rani, the Nawab of Banda and Rao Sahib all received generous cash payments. Amongst the treasures

was a fabulous pearl necklace, taken from the Portuguese regalia. It is reported by some authorities that this fell to the Rani's lot and was worn by her at her death.

On the 3rd June Rao Sahib held a grand durbar to celebrate his assumption of power as head of the Mahratta confederacy. A special canopy was erected to seat all the notables, both military and civil. There were flags and festoons and everyone donned their most spectacular clothes and uniforms. Rao Sahib wore ropes of pearls and strings of diamonds and was hailed with loyal greetings by the whole assembly. There were fanfares of trumpets, shouts of joy and the chanting of Vedic prayers. After a bit, everybody present felt that final victory was certain and that the hated British had already been thrown out of India.

Everybody, that is, except the Rani, who took no part in the festivities but after two days of junketing she told Rao Sahib how foolish he was to rejoice before victory was gained. She knew from bitter experience that the British were not all that easily defeated and that every hour that passed should be spent in re-organising and preparing their troops for the ordeals which must surely lie ahead.

Possibly Rao Sahib was not as foolish as he seemed. All this junketing had great propaganda value. He was creating a new rallying point for the rebels all over the country. He believed that the Mahratta princes of the Deccan would now rise in a body and rally to him. But the Rani, always a realist, thought that without victory all this was vain and empty words.

CHAPTER TWELVE

A Nasty Shock for the British

IN ORDER to appreciate the exact situation of the British troops in Central India at this moment the immediate movements following the fall of Kalpi on 24th May must be recorded. Sir Hugh Rose had despatched a column, under command of Colonel Robertson, to follow up the retreating rebels and report the direction they were taking. This column was composed of Colonel Robertson's own regiment, the 25th Native Infantry, the 3rd Bombay Cavalry, and 150 men of the Hyderabad Cavalry. By this time it was raining heavily and rapid progress was impossible.

By the 29th May Colonel Robertson found himself short of supplies as none were to be found in the district and his column had to halt until more could be sent up from Kalpi. However, on 1st June, he was informed by the Raja of Rampur, a firm friend of the British, that the rebels had taken the road to Gwalior: and an urgent message was sent to Sir Hugh informing him of this most unexpected event. Sir Robert Hamilton thought that it was so unlikely that he could not bring himself to accept it without further confirmation; but a few hours later he himself received a message to the same effect. Sir Hugh had already sent a re-inforcement to Colonel Robertson with the extra supplies, consisting of a wing of the 86th Regiment, two squadrons

of the 14th Dragoons and four 9-pounder guns; these reached Robertson on 2nd June.

As soon as Sir Hugh heard that the retreating rebels were moving on Gwalior—instead of the expected direction of Oudh—he immediately despatched Brigadier Stuart, with part of his 1st Brigade, to re-inforce Colonel Robertson, and then to march on Gwalior after the rebels. Brigadier Stuart's force consisted of one squadron 14th Dragoons, the other wing of the 86th Regiment, a wing of the 71st Highlanders, four companies of the 25th Bengal Native Infantry, no. 4 Light Field Battery, two 18-pounders, one 8-inch howitzer and some Sappers. This force joined Colonel Robertson on 3rd June, but before Brigadier Stuart's arrival, Colonel Robertson was given the astounding information of the surrender of Gwalior to the rebels.

This was a terrible blow. Robertson immediately informed Sir Hugh by express message. The latter telegraphed to Lord Canning expressing his willingness to cancel his leave and resume command of the Central India Field Force with the immediate object of recapturing Gwalior; and, as time was all-important, and communications very slow, Sir Hugh did not wait for orders from Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief, but resumed the command which he had recently laid down and started to issue his own orders and make his preparations accordingly. It was generally understood that he received a rap over the knuckles for so doing; but it is not likely that a man of Sir Hugh's calibre would allow that to deter him from doing what was clearly his duty in the circumstances.

The extent and geographical position of the Gwalior States gave their rulers great political and military power. The main artery of communication and the telegraph line from Bombay to Central India, Agra and the North-West Provinces, traversed Sindhia's dominions for hundreds of miles. The Gwalior troops who went over to the rebels were the best drilled and best organised of all the Native levies;

and to make the situation more embarrassing for the British, with the rainy season about to start—in addition to the great heat—it was the most unfavourable time of year to stage any military operations, particularly as the troops were already exhausted by their arduous campaign with the Central India Field Force. Not only were the conditions unfavourable for campaigning, but the rebels, who had fled in disorder from Kalpi, having lost most of their munitions and supplies, were now unexpectedly set up with all that they needed.

Moreover, the situation would become worse with every day that Gwalior remained in rebel hands and rebellion might spread to the Deccan and the southern Mahratta States, which were denuded of troops. A striking rebel success in Gwalior might have the most unfortunate repercussions. It was also of vital importance that Gwalior should be assaulted before the rains really set in as there were no pontoons for siege artillery and it would be impossible to transport siege guns across the Pahuji and Sind rivers swollen by rains.

Accordingly, leaving a small garrison at Kalpi, Sir Hugh marched on 6th June, with the 1st Troop Bombay Horse Artillery, one squadron 14th Dragoons, one squadron 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry and some Madras Sappers and Miners, to join Brigadier Stuart's column. Sir Hugh pressed on with forced marches, marching by night to avoid the sun. On one day the shade temperature rose to 130 degrees Fahrenheit.

Sir Hugh came up with Brigadier Stuart at the fort of Indurki on the Sind River on 11th June. There he heard that he was to be re-inforced by a Bengal column under Colonel Riddell, consisting of No. 21 Light Field Battery, 3rd Bengal Europeans, 200 Sikh Horse, 300 Sikh infantry and some siege artillery. This column was to escort a number of siege guns from Agra to Gwalior for the siege. He was also to be re-inforced by Brigadier Smith with a

brigade of the Rajputana Field Force. This consisted of the 8th Hussars, the 1st Bombay Light Cavalry, the 95th Regiment, and the 10th Bombay Infantry.

The 8th Hussars (the King's Royal Irish Hussars) had seen service in the Crimean War and were in the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. They were in Ireland when the Indian Mutiny started and they received orders to prepare for immediate embarkation to India on 2nd September, 1857. Their Victoria percussion carbines, which had been in use in the regiment for nearly 16 years, were exchanged for Sharpe's breech-loading carbines. White cotton covers for their forage caps were provided; all their old saddlery was replaced with practically new sets of Pannel saddles; and these were all packed and put on board. The 17th Lancers and the 7th Dragoon Guards were also ordered out to India at the same time. In the event, only 28 officers and 489 N.C.O.s and men of the 8th Hussars embarked for India. Wives and families had to be left behind, each woman receiving a subsistence allowance of sixpence a day from the Government. The depot, consisting of a few old soldiers and recruits of less than one month's service, was formed at Canterbury.

The regiment travelled by rail to Cork on the 5th October and sailed from Queenstown with the 17th Lancers on board the *Great Britain* on 8th October. Lieut.-Colonel de Salis, with three officers and four men, had travelled overland through Egypt to purchase horses, but without success. Eventually the regiment secured a hundred troop horses, mostly from Herat, but with a few Arabs and Persians. Almost all the officers mounted themselves in Bombay on Arab horses for which the dealers charged exorbitant prices.

The native merchants and inhabitants of Bombay gave an entertainment to the newly arrived British troops to welcome them to India. Each soldier had a substantial dinner and a quart of porter. The regiment then proceeded by river

steamer to Kutch, where they received the remainder of their horses. They took part in the operations for the capture of Kotah at the beginning of April, before becoming part of Brigadier Smith's force.

It is difficult to over-estimate the value of the loyal support which the British Government received from those magnificent fighting men, the Sikhs. Only ten years previously they had opposed the British bitterly and given the latter their stiffest battles. Now their loyalty was unbreakable. As a reward for their fidelity, when the Indian Army was re-organised after the Mutiny, and the bulk of the regiments had companies of different castes and religions, the Sikhs had several battalions which were all Sikh.

But to return to June 1858. The Hyderabad Contingent, who had performed invaluable service with the Central India Field Force, had been given permission to return to their homes and had already started on their road to the Deccan; but, with a most praiseworthy spirit and desire to be of service, they instantly counter-marched and made themselves available for the move against Gwalior.

All these plans and preparations outlined above are further evidence of the wide appreciation of the immediate situation by the higher command, which was such a feature of the Mutiny campaign, once the first shock was over. The concentration of superior numbers at the decisive point is one of the first principles of war. The rebels so often had superior numbers but seldom managed to concentrate them at the decisive point. That, and the weakness in action of the leadership at regimental level among the rebels, were two of the main reasons why the British held India, despite the odds against them at various critical times.

Gwalior was a particular instance of this. With the defection of Sindhia's forces and the surrender of Gwalior, British higher command immediately sensed this situation as one of great crisis: and they dealt with it as such with all the available forces at their command.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

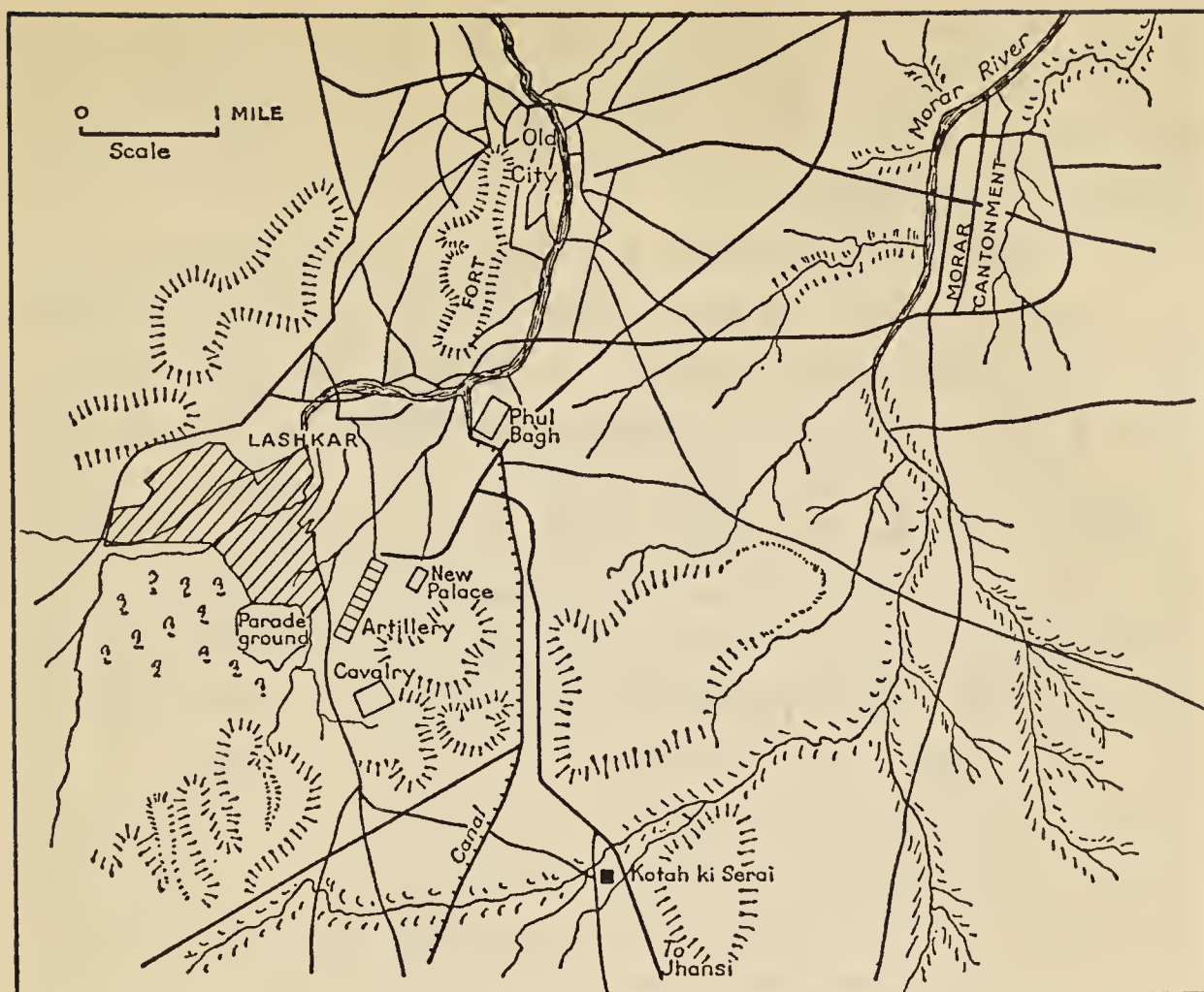
Gwalior—the Last Battle

SIR HUGH selected Agra as the base of operations, its communications with Gwalior being the shortest and the best. From the start he planned to make this operation not merely the capture of yet another fortress—without which of course no effective result could be achieved—but a knock-out blow against this very strong rebel concentration of force, which would virtually finish the Mutiny in Central India.

He decided therefore to invest Gwalior as far as its great size and extend would allow, so that if and when the rebels were compelled to evacuate it they would be heavily attacked whichever way they retreated. This was typical of all Sir Hugh's planning and the reason for the extent of his success. He never said, "I'm doubtful whether Plan A is going to be successful and I can't make any further plans until I know." He said, "I'm convinced that Plan A will succeed and I shall therefore lay on Plan B which will enable me to take the fullest advantage of this success."

In order to invest Gwalior from the south he directed Major (now Lieut.-Colonel) Orr, with the Hyderabad Contingent, to move from Jhansi to Punniar, which was on the road between Sipri and Gwalior: and Brigadier Smith, who was near Chanderi, was ordered to march direct on Kotah-ki-Serai, which was about four miles to the south-east of Gwalior. Colonel Riddell, with his siege guns, was ordered

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Gwalior

to move forward by the Agra-Gwalior road.

Sir Hugh himself, with Brigadier Stuart's column, was to march against the Morar Cantonment, about five miles from Gwalior on the river Morar, which was reported to be held by a strong force of the rebels. He reached Bahadurpur, a few miles to the east of Morar Cantonment at 6 a.m. on the 16th, and was there joined by Brigadier-General Robert Napier (afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala) who took command of the 2nd Brigade, less that part of it which had been left to garrison Kalpi.

Sir Hugh at once ordered Captain Abbott, with his Hyderabad Cavalry, to reconnoitre Morar. On receiving Abbott's report that it was held in strength Sir Hugh galloped forward to have a look for himself. His troops were tired after a long and fatiguing night march; but on the other hand Morar looked inviting, with a number of good buildings which would make fine rest quarters for his troops.

If he delayed his attack until the next day the rebels would very likely have burnt them. The place appeared to be held by strong bodies of cavalry in the centre, flanked by infantry and guns.

Sir Hugh, realising that a prompt attack generally had the greatest effect on the rebels, countermanded the order for encamping and decided to attack at once with a plan which would be as simple and speedy as possible. He formed his force into two lines, the first consisting of the 1st Brigade under Brigadier Stuart, with the second, supporting the 1st, consisting of Brigadier Napier's troops of the 2nd Brigade. Captain Abbott covered the advance with the 3rd Cavalry of the Hyderabad Contingent. The first line had the 18th Light Field Battery and the seige guns in the centre, the 86th Regiment on their right; the 25th Bombay Infantry on their left; and the left wing of the 14th Light Dragoons on either flank. The second line had, in the centre, the Madras Sappers and Miners and a wing of the 71st Highlanders; on the right 100 horse of the Hyderabad Contingent; and on the left the right wing of the 14th Dragoons.

As the troops advanced they passed over the ground on which Sindhia had been attacked and routed by his faithless troops and the Kalpi rebels. It was strewn with dead horses.

The advance of Captain Abbott's cavalry was much impeded by ravines and broken ground, but the infantry pressed their advance home resolutely, effectively supported by the artillery in the centre. The rebel cavalry in their centre retired at a gallop through the Cantonments, pursued by Captain Abbott's men. The latter had his horse killed under him by a roundshot; and the very difficult nature of the ground prevented him from cutting off the retreat of the rebels across the bridge which spanned the river Morar on the other side of the Cantonments; so the rebels were able to get their batteries over the bridge, which they did very hurriedly when they were threatened by the rapid advance of the 86th Regiment.

The main body of the rebels, having been driven from the Cantonments, fell back on a dry nullah with high banks and here they made a desperate stand. Major Rich moved forward his skirmishers of the 71st to dislodge them. Lieut. Neave courageously led the attack and fell mortally wounded when close to the ravine.

The Regimental History of the Highland Light Infantry, entitled *Proud Heritage*, has this interesting comment to make on Lieut. Neave's death. "It is a foolish tradition persisting to this day that an officer need not trouble to perfect himself in the use of his personal weapons. It has probably been responsible for the loss of many a good officer in action, and at Morar, Lieut. Neave, who was killed in one of the nullahs, while gallantly fighting at the head of a few men, might well have saved himself had he been a better swordsman. The mounted regimental officers during the Mutiny usually carried hog spears in the use of which they were exceedingly adept."

The 71st took this nullah and others in rear, Lieut. Rose of the 25th Bombay Infantry, co-operating skilfully by working round a party of his regiment to take the rebel position in enfilade. The 71st showed the utmost gallantry but they had a number of casualties. Sergeant McGill, Corporal Leslie and two men being killed and Sergeant Wilson and six men wounded. In the advanced nullah alone 70 rebels lay dead, belonging to Sindhia's faithless Guards, wearing British accoutrements and breastplates on which were engraved "1st Infantry Brigade". Private George Rodgers of the 71st was awarded the Victoria Cross for his daring conduct in attacking on his own a party of 8 rebels who were well armed and strongly posted and who were holding up the advance. Private Rodgers, V.C., died on 9th March, 1870.

The success of the day was completed by a successful pursuit of the rebels by Captain Thompson, with a wing of the 14th Dragoons. A large party of rebels had been turned by Captain Abbott's advance from the ford of the river

across which their main body had retreated. Captain Thompson caught them in the open plain and caused them very heavy casualties. The value of mobile light cavalry in this type of operation was proved once again by the splendid work of the "Eagle" troop Bombay Horse Artillery under Captain Lightfoot.

In his despatch Sir Hugh praised the spirit and gallantry of his troops in this operation. After the very trying march from Kalpi, moving by night to avoid the sun, and getting very little rest in their tents in the heat of the day, they had attacked Morar Cantonments without a morning meal and, after a preliminary advance of five miles, had taken a strong position within two hours' fighting. The result had entirely justified Sir Hugh's daring move. Not only had he dealt a severe blow to the rebels but he had gained a most important strategic position.

The rebels had been completely surprised by the rapidity of Sir Hugh's advance from Kalpi. They had intended to make a determined stand at Morar and had commenced storing it with supplies. The Rani of Jhansi's strong criticism of her fellow rebel leaders for wasting their time in junketing and rejoicing was fully borne out. Now the former spirit of confidence and bravado in the rebel forces was replaced by one bordering on panic.

Tantia Topi had entrusted to the Rani the defence of the east side of Gwalior, which was considered by Sir Hugh from information received to be the one most difficult to defend, since it was commanded by some hills, the tops of which, though difficult of access, were out of range of the rebel guns. The slopes descended gradually towards the Lashkar (the new part of the city); and from these slopes, once the heights were taken, Sir Hugh could cannonade the Lashkar. Then, covered by artillery fire, he could storm the new town and cut in two the rebels' whole line, the old city, commanded by the fort above—and the Lashkar.

The Rani had impressed on Tantia Topi the importance

of a bold offensive to drive the British back. She donned her armour, took up her powerful sword, with its jewelled scabbard, and set about organising the cavalry and infantry of her command. She was constantly in the saddle, realising full well the great disadvantage under which the heterogeneous collection of Sindhia's army and the Kalpi rebels would labour when opposed by the smaller but better organised and disciplined forces of Sir Hugh Rose.

Some authorities say that it was the Rani in person who led a sudden, dashing attack upon Brigadier Smith as he was encamping at Kotah-ki-Serai on the 16th, which caused him to withdraw. But according to the military records Brigadier Smith didn't arrive at Kotah-ki-Serai until the next morning. It was on that day (the 17th) however that the Rani of Jhansi met her death in battle, so it would seem likely that she was out, at the head of her troops, seeking to engage the British, and may well have led a charge at some point in these operations.

The day after the engagement at Morar, at 7 a.m. on the 17th June, Brigadier Smith, with his Brigade of the Rajputana Field Force, arrived in accordance with Sir Hugh's orders at Kotah-ki-Serai. On the 14th he had been joined by Major Orr and his Hyderabad Contingent. Brigadier Smith had met with no opposition; but on his arrival he saw the rebels in considerable strength occupying the heights, about 1,500 yards in front, between him and Gwalior. As the rebels seemed determined to attack, Kotah-ki-Serai was not a good defensive position, and he was hampered with a large quantity of baggage, Smith thought it best to take the initiative himself. He therefore placed his baggage in and near the fort, under a strong guard, and proceeded to reconnoitre the ground to his front. It was most difficult, intersected with ravines and quite impracticable for cavalry. The rebel position ran under the hills across the Gwalior road.

Brigadier Smith advanced his Horse Artillery and soon

silenced the enemy guns, which began to retire. He then sent his infantry, the 95th Regiment and the 10th Bombay Infantry (later the 110th Mahratta Light Infantry), under Lieut.-Colonel Raines, across the broken ground, with the 95th in front in skirmishing order and the 10th in echelon as a reserve. On nearing the rebel position both battalions came under heavy rifle and artillery fire; but the 95th charged and put the rebels to flight.

On gaining the heights in rear of the encampment Colonel Raines found that the rebels had occupied another line of hills about 800 to 1,000 yards further on. He then saw that a body of the Gwalior Contingent Cavalry were threatening his right flank. However, when he found that Major Vialls, with two companies of the 95th, was in a position to protect him from this threat he continued his advance up the Gwalior road, the rebel guns and cavalry retiring before him.

Meanwhile Brigadier Smith had brought his cavalry forward and, as soon as the road had debauched from a narrow defile, he launched a squadron of the 8th Hussars, consisting of 98 sabres, against two or three hundred of the rebel cavalry who were being formed up in front of Gwalior. The squadron, under Captain Heneage, formed at a gallop and were on top of the rebel cavalry in a moment. Many of the rebel horsemen were cut down and the rest fled towards the town. The Hussars captured two guns and continued on into the midst of the rebel camp. Here they took three guns, cutting down the gunners and completely clearing the camp of the rebel troops, under a heavy fire from the guns in the fort and field guns on the right and left.

After passing through the camp and crossing the road from Gwalior to Morar, the squadron came upon a large body of rebel cavalry and infantry trying to escape in a disorganised mass from the camp to the fort. Many of them made a stand; but the Hussars, never slackening their pace, dashed into the middle of them, cut them down by scores and continued the charge right through the Cantonment.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Death of the Rani

AT SOME point during these operations the Rani of Jhansi was killed, though the fact was not known by Brigadier Smith or any of his troops until much later, as in her cavalry uniform, male attire, and closely cropped hair, she had not been recognised as a woman, particularly in the thick of the fray. The accounts of her death vary considerably. Some say that she was cut down by a Hussar, ignorant of her sex and rank, and that she was killed outright: others say that she had previously been struck by a bullet before being killed by a sabre cut from one of the 8th Hussars; and still others that she was simply killed by a bullet, or shell. The Regimental History of the 8th Hussars says, "Here too the Rani of Jhansi, dressed as a cavalry leader, was cut down by a Hussar, and in her death the rebels lost their bravest and best military leader."

Two Indian authors of repute have given interesting accounts. One comes from the book, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, by Surendra Nath Sen.¹

Early in 1955 the Government of India had commissioned the author to produce a volume on the Indian Mutiny. He had access to all the National Archives of India and the

¹ Published in 1957 by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to the Govt. of India, New Delhi.

National Library of Calcutta and many other authorities. He says: "On the 17th June, when Brigadier Smith advanced from Kota-ki-Serai against Gwalior, died the Ranee of Jhansi. There are two different accounts of her death.¹ Macpherson writes, 'Near the Phoolbagh batteries, I may observe, fell the Ranee of Jhansi. She was seated, says her servant, drinking sherbet, with 400 of the 5th Irregulars near her, when the alarm was given that the Hussars approached. Forty or fifty of them came up and the rebels fled, save about fifteen. The Ranee's horse refused to leap the canal, when she received a shot in the side, and then a sabre cut on the head but rode off. She soon after fell dead and was burnt in a garden close by.' "

The burning of the Rani's body would of course have been the first action of her followers if only to prevent it from falling into British hands. The description however of the body of 400 cavalry being charged by forty or fifty of the Hussars tallies quite well with the official account of the battle described at the end of the last chapter.

Surendra Nath Sen goes on to say, "Sir Robert Hamilton, who made an enquiry on the spot, gives a somewhat different account. He writes, 'There is a matter connected with the manner in which Jhansi Bae was killed which is not in accordance with the result of my enquiries at the time and on the spot. The fact that the Ranee had been killed was not known in Brigadier Smith's camp until he heard of it by a note from me. It occurred, from all I could ascertain, whilst the Ranee, with a group in which were the Rao Sahib and Tantia, were looking at the advance on the heights early in the day. The Ranee was on horseback, and close to her was the female (a Mahomedan long in the family) who never seems to have left her side on any occasion. These two were struck by bullets and fell. The Ranee survived about twenty minutes; she was carried towards Pool Bagh, the Rao Sahib attending her. This event

¹ There are others as well.

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quite upset the Chiefs, and caused the greatest consternation; arrangements were instantly made for burning the body which was conveyed in a palkee to the bank of the river between the Pool Bagh and the fort, whence, it not being practicable to get the palankeen over the enclosure of a garden near a temple, the body was lifted out and carried by the attendants over the enclosure to a spot under some fine large trees where it was burnt. Hardly had the ceremony been performed when the charge of the 8th Hussars came almost up to the garden and temple. It was evident that the ceremony had been interrupted, for when I went to the spot Dr. Christison picked up fragments of bones which proved that the usual custom of sifting the ashes had not been performed.' ”

The other Indian author is D. V. Tahmankar, who wrote *The Ranee of Jhansi* in 1958.¹ The main object of his book was “to show by citing evidence, which was either overlooked by the British historians or was not available to them, that the Ranee was innocent of the grave crime she had been charged with.”

Mr. Tahmanker gives this account of the death of the Rani. “The Ranee advanced with her men and gave battle, covered by heavy artillery fire. Inspired by her presence, her troops attacked the enemy with determination and skill and forced them back again, but they were reinforced by a squadron of the 8th Hussars under Captain Heneage. Still the rebels held their ground, killing the enemy as fast they could. The Ranee was in the thick of the fight using her sword with both hands and holding the reins of her horse in her mouth.”²

¹ Published by Macgibbon & Kee Ltd.

² Shri Vrindal Varma of Jhansi cites Turab Ali as his authority for this feat, who was in the police service of the East India Company and was stationed at Jhansi. Ali died in 1943 at the age of 113 and told Mr. Varma before his death that he used to see Lakshmibai, the name the Ranee acquired on her marriage to the Maharajah, practising the art of managing her horse

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Suddenly she fell from a carbine shot mortally wounded. The British were unaware of the Ranee's fall, her identity being effectively concealed by her male attire—she was wearing cavalry uniform—and her cropped hair. One of her faithful servants picked her up quickly and carried her to the rear. Her 200 men, true to their vow, fought to the last man, but when they had fallen the Hussars broke through to the rebel camp. It was two days before the British knew that they had deprived the Peshwa's (Tantia Topi's) army of its one effective leader."

Tahmankar claims that since the reports of Macpherson and Hamilton were written "more authentic and reliable data on the circumstances surrounding the death of the Ranee have been found in the old records of Bhopal, Gwalior and Indore." His aim and object is to paint the Rani as a fearless and resourceful leader of her troops in battle and there is really no doubt about this. Whether she was killed by a bullet or a sabre cut or both she died bravely on the field of battle; and wherever she fought she inspired her followers with her own courage and determination. But it is difficult to marry up Tahmankar's account of her 200 men who "true to their vow, fought to the last man ..." with other accounts of the battle.

On the other hand it is recorded in *The V.C. and D.S.O.*, by General Sir O'Moore Creagh, V.C., first published in 1920, regarding the charge of the squadron of the 8th Hussars on 17th June, 1858: "There was no pretence of resistance any longer except for a slight, full-armed figure that was helplessly whirled along in this cataract of men and horses. Again and again this one leader, gesticulating and vociferating, attempted to stem the torrent of routed rebels, but in vain. There was no possibility of holding up the

with the reins in her teeth and wielding two swords in her two hands. She practised this regularly twice a week in the gardens attached to her royal palace—now known as Hardy Gang.

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broken Mahrattas and at last a chance shot struck down, across his horse's neck, this one champion of the retreating force. A moment later the swaying figure was overtaken, and one stroke from a Hussar's sabre ended the whole matter."

But Sir O. T. Burne, who was at one time Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief in India, in his book, *Clyde and Strathnairn*, first published in 1891, gives as his contribution to the controversy the following account. "This Indian Joan of Arc was dressed in a red jacket and trousers and a white turban. She wore Sindhia's celebrated pearl necklace which she had taken from his treasury. As she lay mortally wounded in her tent, she ordered these ornaments to be distributed among her troops. The whole rebel army mourned her loss."

Most of these accounts agree that the Rani survived a short time after she was wounded. It would be typical of her, if she had any valuable jewels upon her person at the time, to say they should be distributed among her troops. Her generosity in this respect had always been proverbial.

Tahmankar however cites other accounts from Indian sources. One of these is quoted from a despatch written by one Bhawan Prasad, who was a representative of the Begum of Bhopal, attached to Sir Robert Hamilton's camp. This despatch to the Begum was dated 18th June, 1858, the day after the Rani's death. It states: "Yesterday, the Ranee of Jhansi and the Nawab of Banda both present at the entrenchment were personally directing the bombardment against Major R's (Sir Hugh Rose) position. During the engagement that ensued one shell from Major R's battery blew off an arm of the Nawab of Banda and another went off bruising the Ranee's breast which resulted in her death."

No word of any cavalry charge or sabre cuts here. The Maharaja of Indore also had representatives at Sir Robert Hamilton's camp. One of these, Ramchandra Vinayak, writes: "Jhansiwali Bai was killed in battle on 17th June.

It happened like this: at the time of the engagement the lady was present on the battlefield where she received a sabre blow which killed her. All people call her the bravest fighter."

There are other accounts than these, all equally at variance. The most attractive of these is of the small, full-armed figure, wielding her sword amidst the fleeing rebels and trying to rally them—in vain. But probably the most generally accurate is Major Macpherson's, since it marries up with other internal evidence regarding the actual movements of the British troops and is not too much at variance with the various independent accounts, all of which would seem to have been hearsay.

But to continue the story of the charge of the 8th Hussars, under Captain Heneage. He withdrew his squadron at an easy pace, after their successful charge through the cantonment, and was shortly joined by the detachment under Lieut. Harding, who also had charged through the camp. After the charge Captain Heneage was overcome by heat exhaustion and Lieut. Reilly died suddenly from the same cause. The squadron was so exhausted from their exertions that the men scarcely had the strength to sit in their saddles.

For their very gallant action on this day, 17th June, the 8th Hussars were awarded four Victoria Crosses. Rule 13 of the Royal Warrant of 1856 had established the principle that the V.C. could be awarded by election of the officers, non-commissioned officers and private soldiers of a unit. In the earlier wars—particularly in the Indian Mutiny—a number of awards were decided in this way. Later the practice died out almost completely.

In this case however the four V.C.s were chosen by their comrades and they were the Squadron Commander, Captain Clement Walker Heneage; Sergeant Joseph Ward; Farrier George Hollis and Private John Pearson.

Captain Heneage was born on 6th March, 1831, and was 27 years old when he won his Cross. His father was

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M.P. for Devizes and his mother was a Devonshire girl. He was educated at Eton and Christchurch, Oxford, and was gazetted to the 8th Hussars as a Cornet on 10th August, 1851. He served all through the Crimean War, being present at the battles of the Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman. For his services in this campaign he received the Crimea medal with four clasps and the Turkish medal. He was promoted Captain in India on 12th May, 1857, just as the Mutiny was starting.

Clement Heneage became a Major in 1860 and in 1865 he married Henrietta Letitia Victoria Vivian, daughter of J. H. Vivian of Singleton, who was M.P. for Swansea, and a brother of the first Lord Vivian. They had five children, including Godfrey Clement Walker, who became a Major in the Grenadier Guards, a D.S.O. and M.V.O.; and Algernon, who became a Rear-Admiral, a C.B. and M.V.O. Major Heneage retired from the Army in 1868 and died at his birthplace, Compton Bassett in Wiltshire, on 9th December, 1901, at the age of 70. He outlived his three fellow V.C.s.

In his despatch, Brigadier Smith, who himself received high commendation from Sir Hugh Rose, spoke very highly of the steady and soldier-like conduct of both officers and men of the 10th Native Infantry and the 95th Regiment who, though exhausted by fatigue and want of food, had stormed the heights under a burning sun and heavy fire. As soon as Sir Hugh received this account of Brigadier Smith's action he sent Colonel Robertson, with the 25th Bombay Native Infantry, three troops 14th Dragoons and four guns of the 4th Light Field Battery, to re-inforce him.

The next day, 18th June, Sir Hugh was himself re-inforced by the arrival of the Kalpi garrison, thus bringing his 2nd Brigade, under Brigadier Napier, up to strength. This enabled Sir Hugh to march on Kotah-ki-Serai, leaving Napier with most of the mobile troops for the protection of Morar, the investment of Gwalior and the pursuit of the rebels when Gwalior fell.

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Sir Hugh's troops consisted of two troops 14th Dragoons; No. 18 Light Field Battery; Madras Sappers and Miners; Wing 71st Highland Light Infantry; 86th Regiment; Wing 5th Hyderabad Contingent Cavalry; two 18-pounders and one 8-inch howitzer.

After a gruelling march to Kotah-ki-Serai Sir Hugh bivouacked for the night on the left bank of the River Morar in close touch with Brigadier Smith. The latter's position was weak and cramped, his left and rear being threatened by two large bodies of rebel troops, one in the gorge and one on the heights above. They showed every sign of taking the offensive.

Quite early in the morning Sir Hugh received an express message from Sir Robert Hamilton to say that he had been given reliable information that the rebels intended to attack that day. There was no time for further consideration. Sir Hugh at once directed Brigadier Stuart to move the 86th Regiment, supported by the 25th Bombay Native Infantry, across a canal which protected the rebels, to attack their left flank. As a diversion he directed Brigadier Smith to move Lieut.-Colonel Raines, with the 95th Regiment, from his right front across to his own left, against a large body of rebels who were in an entrenched position covered by guns. This movement was supported by the 10th Bombay Native Infantry.

At the same time Sir Hugh ordered up the 3rd Troop Bombay Horse Artillery, supported by a squadron of the 8th Hussars, to the entrance of the pass towards Gwalior.

Brigadier Smith crossed the canal and ascended the heights with the 86th Regiment, under Lieut.-Colonel Lowth. Their skirmishers pressed the rebel infantry so hard that they did not make a stand, even under their own guns, which were captured—three excellent British 9-pounders.

Lieut.-Colonel Raines, with his 95th Regiment, coming along in close support of the 86th, turned the captured guns on the rebel cavalry, the guns being manned by some

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men of the 86th and 95th, who had had some instruction in gunnery.

Meanwhile the 10th Bombay Native Infantry, led by Lieut. Roome, moved up to protect the right flank of the two assaulting regiments. Despite considerable artillery and musketry fire from the heights on the extreme left of the rebel position, he cleared the two nearest hills of rebel infantry and captured ten brass field-pieces and three mortars.

So far so good. The British were now in possession of the commanding heights to the east of Gwalior and the city could be seen lying below them. To the right was the handsome palace of the Phulbagh, with its gardens, and the old city surmounted by the fortress, with lines of extensive fortifications round the high and precipitous rock of Gwalior. To the left lay the Lashkar, or new city, with its spacious houses half hidden by trees. The slopes descended gradually towards Gwalior; the lowest one commanding the grand parade of the Lashkar, which was almost out of range of the fort and afforded an entrance into the city.

In the plain, below the heights which the British had now captured, were the retreating rebel forces in considerable disarray and confusion. They were moving as rapidly as possible to seek refuge in one or other of the walled enclosures in the fort.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Fortress of Gwalior Falls

SIR HUGH ROSE felt convinced that if he could strike quickly, before the rebels had time to recover their morale, he could take Gwalior before sunset. He planned therefore to attack immediately on a wide front, extending from the palace of the Phulbagh on the right, to the barracks on the left of the grand parade of the Lashkar. Covering his right flank with the 3rd Troop, Bombay Horse Artillery and a squadron of the 8th Hussars, he ordered Lieut.-Colonel Owen, with the 1st Bombay Lancers, to descend the heights to the rear and make his way to the road which led through the hills to the south, where he would be in a position to attack the grand parade and the Lashkar. Then, covering his own advance with No. 4 Light Field Battery and two troops of the 14th Dragoons, Sir Hugh advanced, with the 86th Regiment on the left and the 95th on the right.

As these two infantry regiments debauched on to the plain the 1st Bombay Lancers, who had reached their rendezvous as ordered, charged across the grand parade, the first squadron led by Lieut. Heath and the second by Captain Lock. They drove back the rebel infantry and pursued them into the Lashkar, where a very gallant officer, Lieut. Mills, was shot through the heart, Captain Lock cutting down the man that killed him. Colonel Raines,

with two companies of the 95th, followed up the charge of the Lancers and took two 18-pounders and two small mortars on the grand parade.

When the general advance was ordered, the 10th Bombay Infantry also joined in. Gwalior fort kept up a constant artillery fire during the advance, but without great effect. The rebel cavalry and infantry retreated through the town very rapidly, with the cavalry leading—instead of covering the infantry. Throughout these operations it was the rebel cavalry which suffered most from the lack of their British officers.

At that period of our history the British cavalry were the best in the world. The charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimea, though it should never have been allowed to happen, was nevertheless, so far as the regiments engaged were concerned, a glorious episode of British arms and one which could not have been undertaken by any other cavalry in the world. Possibly the higher cavalry commanders of those times were not greatly distinguished for their brains or military knowledge, but the regimental and squadron commanders were outstanding as leaders of their men in battle; and the charge in serried ranks was the be-all and end-all of the cavalry tactics of the day.

When the Indian Mutiny started the Native cavalry were even more dependent on the leadership of their British officers than were the Native infantry; and throughout these operations of the Central India Field Force there were always bitter recriminations between the rebel infantry and the rebel cavalry and these recriminations increased in bitterness as the operations continued. There is indeed little doubt that the rebel cavalry, though individually gallant when the tide flowed their way, generally made use of their horses to lead a retreat rather than to cover their own infantry.

The British line swept on, driving the rebels before them, and before sunset the Lashkar was in British hands. That

night Sir Hugh rested in the regained palace of Sindhia. Lieut.-Colonel Robertson of the 25th Bombay Infantry was appointed Commandant of Gwalior and directed to occupy it with his regiment.

The city had fallen without difficulty. Sir O. T. Burne gives an interesting sidelight on this fact. He says, "... this was effected without bloodshed through the useful interposition of Captain (later Sir Richard) Meade. He happened to be well known to the Gwalior men, and gallantly volunteered to go forward alone to the palace courtyard, which was full of armed and excited soldiery, to persuade them to submit peaceably, and to give up the palace. They fortunately recognised him, and after some delay, acted on his advice. Captain Meade came back unhurt to the General and reported that the force could move forward."

Meanwhile Brigadier Smith had taken the garden palace of Phulbagh, killing numbers of the rebels. He then followed up the retreating rebels right into the night, inflicting great loss on them and capturing most of their guns. Thus by nightfall on 19th June, with the loss of only 87 men killed and wounded, Sir Hugh had regained all Gwalior with the exception of the formidable fortress.

The great rock fortress, grim and unapproachable, still towered defiantly above the surrounding buildings. It stood on a vast eminence, about four miles in length, but narrow and of unequal breadth, and nearly flat on top. The sides appeared almost perpendicular and the only entrance was by steps running up the side of the rock; the fort was defended on the side next to the city by a wall and bastion and further guarded by seven stone gateways. The area within was full of fine buildings, reservoirs of water, wells and cultivated land. The rebel guns, firing from the ramparts, had maintained a continuous but not very effective fire throughout the operations on the 19th June.

On the morning of 20th June two British officers of the 25th Bombay Light Infantry, with a party of sepoy from

that regiment, performed a deed of great gallantry and daring, in which one of them won the Victoria Cross and the other lost his life.

Lieut. Rose, a relation of Sir Hugh's, being the son of Rose of Kilvarock, was in command of a detachment of his regiment not far from the main gateway into the fort. Hearing sounds of laughter and revelry inside, Rose proposed to a brother officer, Lieut. Waller, who was commanding a piquet close by, that they should have a go at entering the fortress on their own. If the risks were great the honour would be still greater if they brought it off. Waller cheerfully agreed and the two officers set off with their men and a blacksmith, who willingly gave his services. They were then joined by the Adjutant, Captain Plomer, who had happened to be visiting the piquet at the time; and one must give all credit to Captain Plomer that he didn't throw any spanners into the works and say that they were acting without orders; he just said, "Fine, go to it."

The two subalterns and their gallant sepoy crept up to the gate and the blacksmith, a powerful man armed with the tools of his trade, forced it open; he then did the same with five of the other seven gates into the fortress. By the time the sixth gate had been forced the alarm had been given. When the attackers had reached the archway beyond the last gate they were met with the fire of a field gun. Dashing onwards, unscathed by the fire, they became engaged in a hand-to-hand contest with some of the garrison in which a small party of the rebels fought with the utmost determination. A desperate fight took place; but Rose and Waller and their men carried all before them.

In the hour of victory however Rose was mortally wounded. The man who shot him, a mutineer from Bareilly, then rushed out and cut him across the knee and wrist with a sword. Waller came up and killed the rebel but too late to save the life of his friend.

By this time re-inforcements were hurrying forward and

the great fortress had fallen—through the gallantry and initiative of two young British officers. Waller was awarded the V.C. and Rose would have been too had he lived: but posthumous awards of that high decoration had not then been authorised. Sir Hugh Rose and his Brigade Commander, Brigadier C. S. Stuart, however both paid warm tributes to the gallantry of Lieut. Rose.

Lieut. Waller was born in 1840: he entered the service in 1857 at the age of 17 and won his V.C. a year later. He died on 29th January, 1885, in his 45th year.

Several Indian ranks of the 25th, who were associated in this gallant episode, were mentioned in despatches. The British losses in the Gwalior operation amounted to 21 killed and 44 wounded, of whom 5 subsequently died.

When Sir Hugh heard the news of the capture of the fortress he at once ordered Brigadier-General Napier to pursue the rebels as closely and as far as he could. Napier started at 9 a.m. on the 20th, with about 600 cavalry of the 14th Dragoons, 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, 3rd Hyderabad Horse and Meade's Horse.

Meade's Horse was a most interesting unit. It had been raised at Agra in December 1857 and January 1858 by Captain Meade (the same who went into Gwalior to persuade the rebels to give up), who had been for some years Brigade-Major of the Gwalior Contingent. The nucleus of the regiment was formed by 100 Sikhs and Punjabi Mussulmans. To them were added some 85 Eurasians and Native Christians, chiefly drummers and bandsmen taken from disbanded Native regiments which were formed into a Christian troop. None of these men had ever been on a horse before. In January 1858, 45 mounted Jats from Rohtak joined and later 70 horsemen, raised by the Thakur of Jhara, so they were a very mixed bag.

The labour of drilling and training them as a mounted unit may be imagined. In this task Captain Meade was greatly assisted by Pensioned Sergeant H. Hartigan of the

THE FORTRESS OF GWALIOR FALLS

9th Lancers, who had been awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallantry at Delhi on 8th June, 1857, and Agra on 10th October, 1857. Sergeant Hartigan subsequently obtained a commission in the 16th Lancers. He died on 29th October, 1886.

Napier came up with the rebels, who were reported to be 12,000 strong, with 22 guns, at Jaora-Alipur shortly before sunrise on the 21st. They were drawn up in two lines. The first consisted of infantry and a bullock battery of six guns; the second was composed of cavalry and horse and field artillery. They were the entire remnants of the Kalpi army, with additions picked up at Gwalior.

Brigadier Napier ordered Captain Lightfoot to take up a position with his artillery on the left flank, where the latter could enfilade the rebels. He then posted his cavalry behind some rising ground which gave them partial concealment. The guns opened fire at a range of 600 yards and soon succeeded in silencing the rebel artillery and a rapid thinning and wavering of their ranks was then evident.

Captain Lightfoot limbered up and advanced at a gallop and Captain Abbott charged with his cavalry at the same time. These movements were immediately followed by the rest of the cavalry, the 14th Dragoons, led by Captain Prettijohn, the Hyderabad Cavalry, under Lieut. Dick, and the detachment of Meade's Horse under Lieut. Burlton.

The whole of this little force swept through the rebel batteries and camp and past the villages into the open plain. The rebels lost all their guns, a quantity of ammunition, elephants, tents, carts and baggage and had between three and four hundred men killed. Tantia Topi had been present at the beginning of this engagement but, in his usual way, departed hurriedly from the scene as soon as he saw his troops had little stomach for the fight.

Meanwhile, at Sir Hugh's suggestion, Sindhia had arrived with his retinue at Gwalior and was escorted back to his

THE REBELLIOUS RANI

palace by a squadron of the 14th Light Dragoons. The road leading from the grand parade to the palace was lined by an enthusiastic crowd of inhabitants, who greeted their prince with acclamation—eager no doubt to be back on the winning side. But of course some grisly things had been done during Rao Sahib's brief interregnum, which possibly persuaded many of them that the old rule was best. Dr. Thomas Lowe records that many of the populace had had their hands, feet and noses cut off by the rebels . . . "and one of our lancers was found hanging up by his feet with his head severed from his body."

Sindhia was unceasing in his endeavours to prove his deep gratitude to the Government of India and to the gallant soldiers who had restored him to his throne and he asked permission to present a medal to the troops engaged. Lord Canning approved this request but it was turned down by the Home Government.

The capture of Gwalior and the dispersal of the rebels at Jaora-Alipur brought Sir Hugh Rose's campaign to an end. Of his two main enemies, the Rani of Jhansi had been defeated and killed, but the other one, the wily Tantia Topi, had escaped; and it was many months before he was captured and brought to the gallows on the 18th April, 1859.

Sir Hugh handed over his command to Brigadier-General Napier on 29th June, 1858, and proceeded to Bombay to assume command of the army of that Presidency. In his farewell Order of the Day to the troops of the Central India Field Force he paid the highest tributes to their courage, discipline and endurance in very trying conditions. As well he might!

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Conclusion

WITHIN A period of six months Sir Hugh had won a series of brilliant victories and brought the end of the Mutiny in sight. But although he had overcome his most dangerous and capable enemy in the Rani of Jhansi another old adversary returned to the field in the person of Tantia Topi. Although Tantia lacked the Rani's powers of leadership and command he was possibly the more fertile in resources; and in the conditions which then existed he was both hard to catch and hard to beat.

An officer who took part in his pursuit wrote as follows: "Each fresh commandant who took the field fancied he could catch Tantia; prodigious marches were made, officers and men threw aside their baggage and their tents; they covered up to forty miles a day—but Tantia did fifty. In the end all our horses were sore-backed and a halt of a week or ten days became necessary."

Tantia worked his camels and horses to the death; he had the people with him and obtained the best of information, so he nearly always managed to be one jump ahead.

On 22nd June, 1858, Tantia Topi, accompanied by Rao Sahib and the Nawab of Banda, fled westward towards Jaipur, in which city he believed a strong party was prepared to rise in his favour. But he was forestalled there by

Major-General Roberts, commanding the Rajputana Field Force. Tantia then turned southwards towards Bundi, where the Maharao, Ram Singh, whose allegiance had been somewhat shaky, shut his gates against the rebels. But the regular forces had little chance of catching up with them for the rebels carried no tents and no provisions, simply looting the countryside for all their requirements. And though hard pressed by a column under Colonel Holmes, detached by General Napier, Tantia evaded capture and remained a thorn in the flesh of the British for several months to come.

At the beginning of 1859, after many adventures and escapes, Tantia Topi had joined forces with a new ally and friend, Man Singh, who really had had no grievance against the British but had quarrelled with his overlord, the Maharaja of Gwalior. But Tantia parted company with Man Singh to join Shahzada Firuz Shah at Indargarh on 13th January.

The sands were running out however for Tantia and his friends. Several British columns were closing in around him and his dwindling forces suffered a heavy defeat at Sikar on 14th February, after which his troops, and those of Rao Sahib, started to disintegrate. Many of them threw away their arms and tried to get back to their homes. Organised opposition to the British Government had ceased.

Rao Sahib wandered from place to place until 1862, when he was arrested in the hills north of the Punjab, disguised as a pilgrim. He was hanged on 20th August of that year. Firuz Shah managed to avoid capture and appears to have died in Mecca ten years later, in abject poverty.

In April 1859, his erstwhile friend, Man Singh, betrayed Tantia Topi to the British. Tantia, at the time, was living in hiding in the heart of the jungle with only two attendants.

At the Court-Martial assembled at Sipri on the 15th April, 1859, Tantia Topi was charged "with having been in

CONCLUSION

rebellion and having waged war against the British Government between June 1857 and December 1858, and having subsequently been leader of, and present with, the Rebel Army which fought against the British Force under Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, K.C.B., near Jhansi, on or about the 1st April, 1858, and also one of the leaders and present with the Rebel Army, which having attacked and defeated Maharajah Sindhia near Gwalior, on or about 1st June, 1858, occupied Gwalior, and subsequently fought at or near Gwalior, against the British Force under the same Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, K.C.B., between 14th and 21st June, 1858."

The Sentence of the Court was "The Court having found the Prisoner Tantia Topee, guilty as above specified, does now under the provision of Act XIV of 1857 sentence him the said Tantia Topee, a resident at Bithur in the District of Cawnpoor, in the territory of British India, to suffer death by being hanged by the neck until he be dead."

The capture of Man Singh and Tantia Topi virtually brought the Mutiny to an end though sporadic operations continued into 1859.

Perhaps the most remarkable aftermath of this very grave and bitter affair was the way in which the British, with their genius for so-called colonialism, were able to build up from a state of chaos, murder and brutality, so soundly and imaginatively, that in two world wars the new Indian Army became the greatest voluntary army in the world. And, within ninety years of the end of the Mutiny, Britain was able to transfer her power to the two independent Commonwealth countries of India and Pakistan. This was indeed a stupendous achievement of which all three countries can be justly proud.

APPENDIX I

List of Europeans and Eurasians murdered at Jhansi on 7th June, 1857

Captain Alexander Skene, Superintendent, Mrs. Skene and two female children.

Mrs. Browne, wife of Capt. Browne, Deputy Commissioner of Jalaun, and Miss Browne, his sister.

Captain F. D. Gordon, 10th Madras Infantry, Deputy Commissioner of Jhansi.

Lieut. Burgess, Revenue Surveyor, Bundelkhand.

Lieut. Turnbull, Assistant Revenue Surveyor.

Lieut. Powis, Assistant Surveyor, Irrigation, Mrs. Powis. and one female child.

Dr. and Mrs. McEgan.

Mr. T. Andrews, Principal Sadar Amin, Jhansi.

Mr. R. Andrews, Deputy Collector and Magistrate, Mrs. Andrews, two male and two female children.

Mr. W. Carshore, Collector of Customs, Mrs. Carshore and four children.

Mr. D. C. Wilton, Mrs. Wilton, one child and two sisters of Mrs. Wilton.

Mrs. D. D. Blyth, Assistant Revenue Surveyor, Mrs. Blyth and her mother and four children.

Sergeant Millard, Sub. Assistant Revenue Surveyor, Mrs. Millard and three children.

APPENDIX I

Mr. Burnett, Sub. Assistant Revenue Surveyor.
Mr. J. Young, Sub. Assistant Revenue Surveyor and Mrs. Young.
Messrs. G. Young and Palfreyman, Apprentices.
Mr. Munrow, Sub. Assistant Revenue Surveyor.
Mr. A. Scott, Head Clerk, Deputy Commissioner's Office.
Mr. C. Purcell, Head Clerk, Superintendent's Office.
Mr. J. Purcell, Clerk, Deputy Commissioner's Office.
Mr. Mutlow, Clerk, Superintendent's Office.
Mr. Mutlow (2nd) unemployed.
Mr. D. G. Elliott, Clerk, Deputy Commissioner's Office.
Mr. and Mrs. Elliott, parents of above.
Messrs. Fleming and Crawford.
Captain Dunlop, 12th Bengal Infantry, commanding at Jhansi.
Lieut. Taylor, 12th Bengal Infantry.
Lieut. Campbell, commanding detachment 14th Irregular Cavalry.
Quarter-Master Sergeant Newton, Mrs. Newton and two children.

Total murdered : Men 30, Women 16, Children 20.

APPENDIX II

Diary of Events

1857

10th May	Mutiny starts at Meerut
11th May	Delhi Magazine blown
7th June	Massacre at Jhansi
25th June	Massacre at Cawnpore of all the men
30th June	Siege of Lucknow begins
	Mutiny at Saugor
July	Massacre of women and children at
15/16 July	Cawnpore
17th July	Relief of Cawnpore
August	Mutiny at Jubbulpore
	Mutiny spreads in Saugor and Nerbudda
	Districts
September	Siege of Saugor starts
20th September	Recapture of Delhi
17th November	Relief of Lucknow
16th December	Sir Hugh Rose arrives at Indore
1858	
6th January	Sir Hugh Rose leaves Indore
28th January	Raja of Banpur defeated at Bina river
29th January	Fall of Rathgurnh
31st January	Barodia
3rd February	Relief of Saugor

APPENDIX II

11th February	Garakhota
3rd March	Pass at Madanpur
4th March	Surahi and Maraora
17th March	Chanderi
22nd March	Jhansi invested
31st March	Battle of Betwa River
3rd April	Storming of Jhansi
4th April	Escape of Rani
5th April	Capture of City
6th April	Fall of fort
2nd May	Lohari
6/7 May	Kunch
22nd May	Golauli
23rd May	Kalpi
1st June	Rebels take Gwalior
16th June	Morar
17th June	Kotah-ki-Serai
	Death of Rani
19th June	Battle for Gwalior
20th June	Fall of Gwalior

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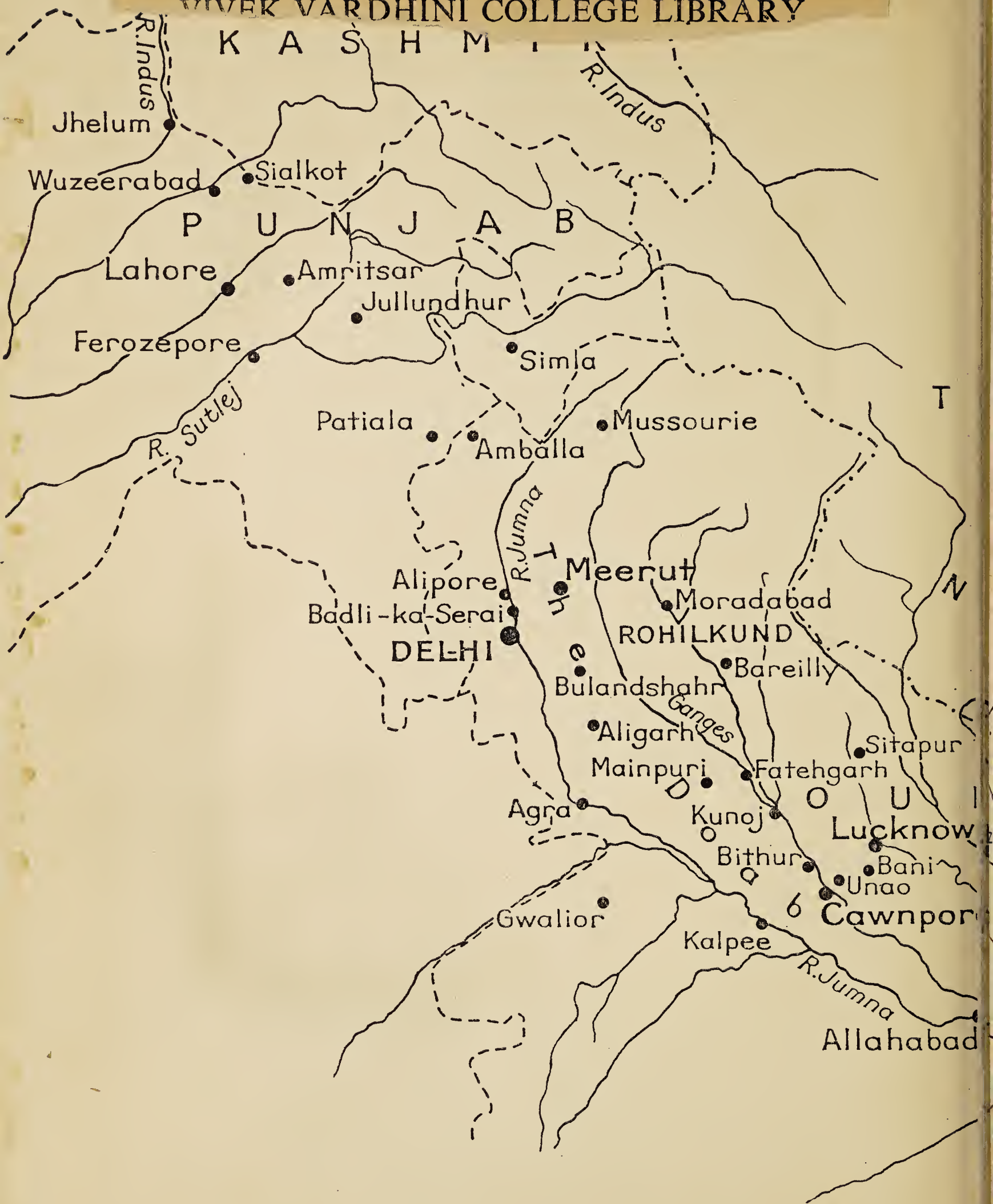
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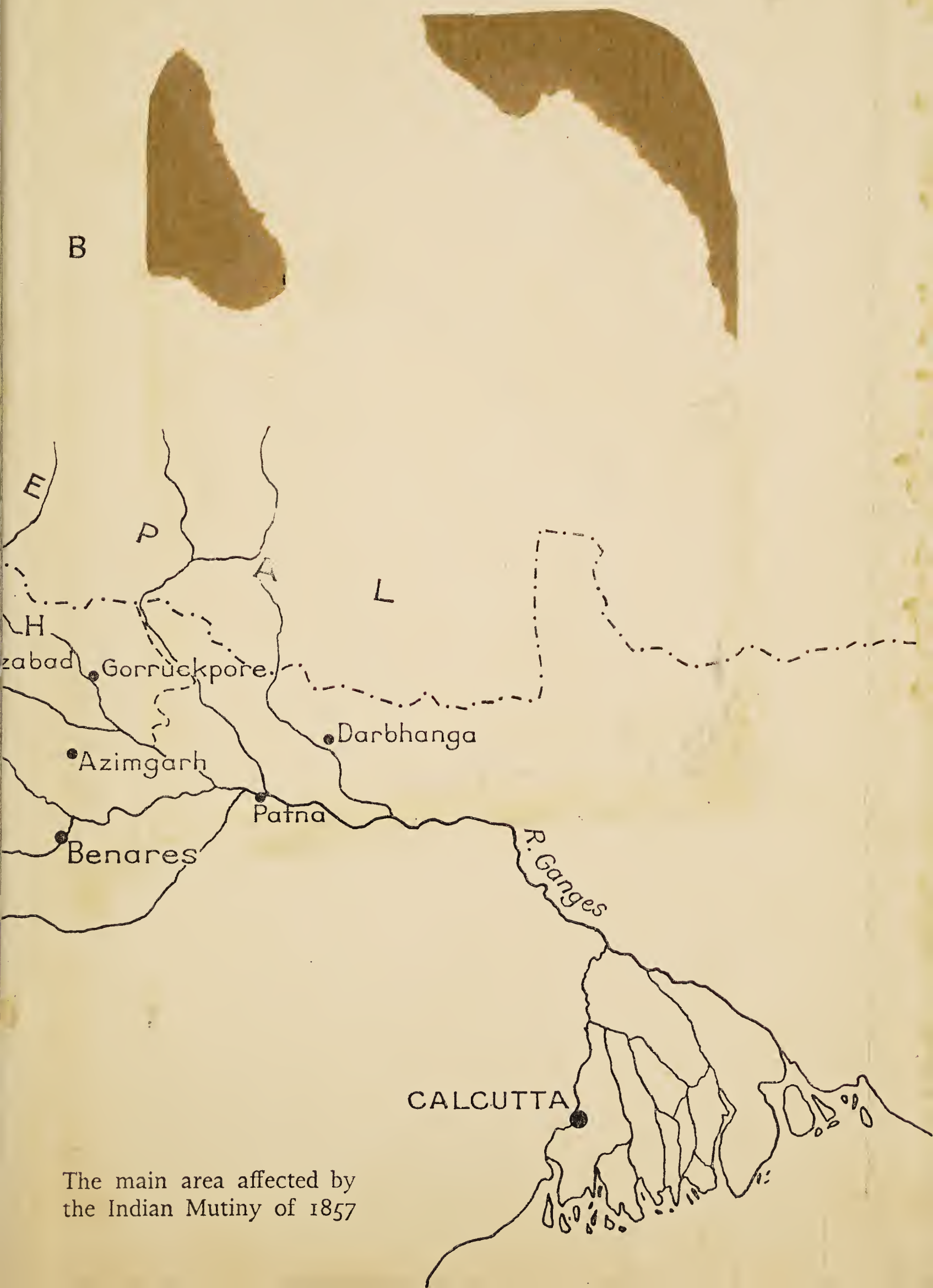
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0 50 100 200 MILES
Scale



The main area affected by
the Indian Mutiny of 1857

